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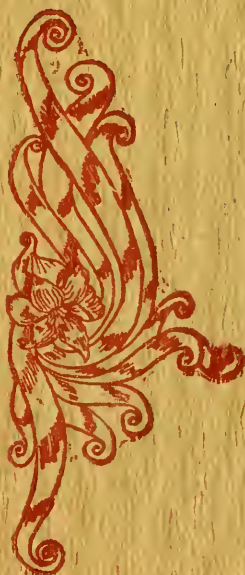








**THE HORRORS  
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PRISONS DUR-  
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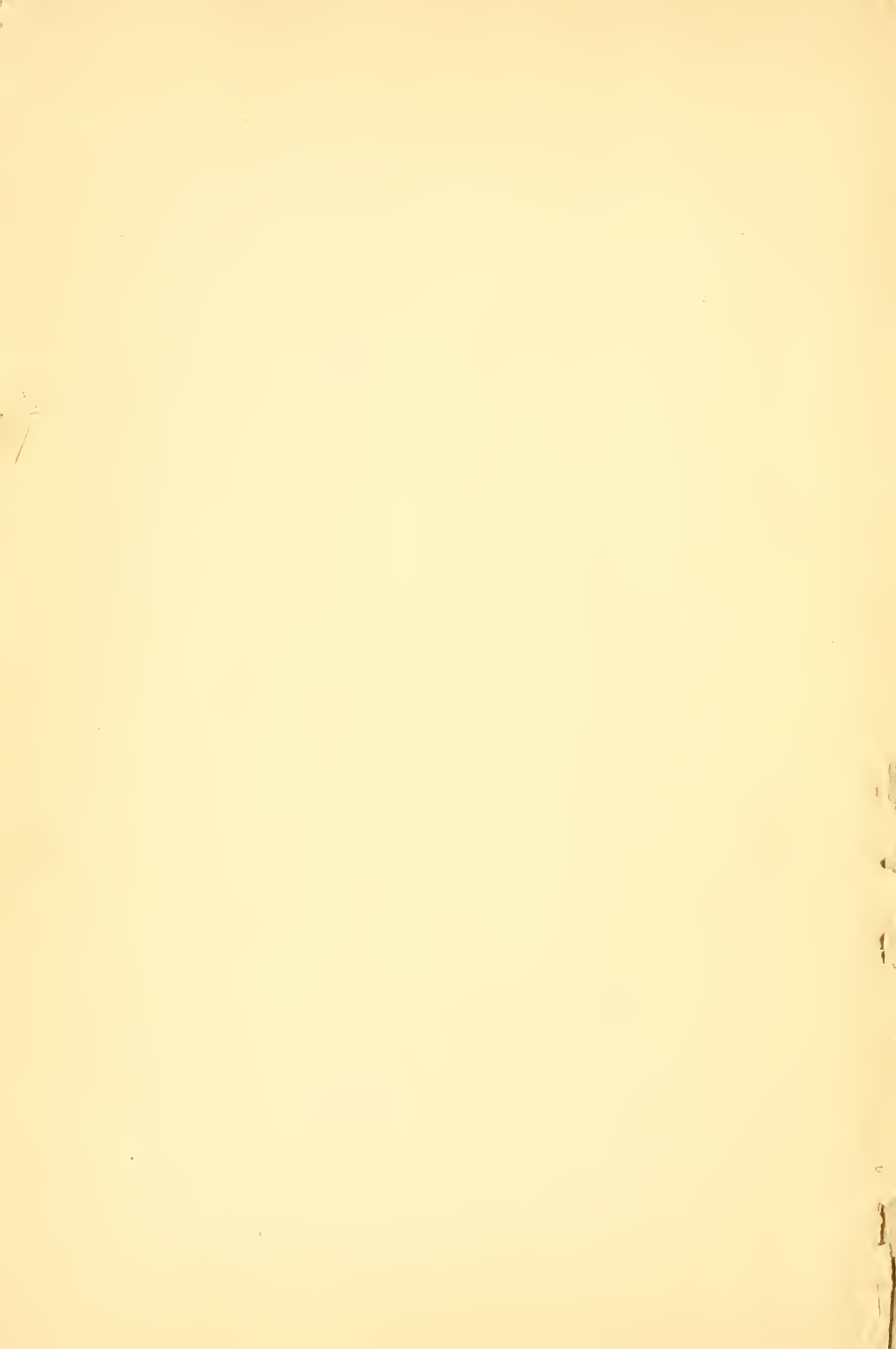


**FROM 1861 TO 1865**













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W. H. LIGHTCAP  
FROM PHOTO TAKEN AT NASHVILLE, TENN.,  
IN 1862.



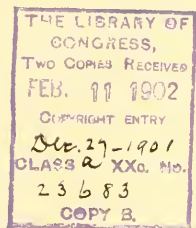
THE HORRORS OF SOUTHERN  
PRISONS  
DURING THE WAR OF THE  
REBELLION

FROM 1861 TO 1865

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By W. H. LIGHTCAP  
Lancaster, Wis.



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## PREFACE.

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I HAVE often been requested, by numerous friends, to write and have published a little book, containing a history of my experiences during the War of the Rebellion, from 1861 to 1865, in Andersonville and other prisons. I am prompted more, to do this, for the purpose of leaving a record with my children, of the terrible trials endured by their father, in his efforts to assist the Union cause in the preservation of this great and grand republic. This is not intended for the critic's eye, for I make no pretensions to being an historian.

As so many soldiers' experiences were very much similar and as so much has been written about all the battles, marches, etc., I shall not commence at the beginning of my service, but at the time we returned from the Rossau raid of thirteen and one half days to Marietta, Georgia, and the day after when volunteers were called for, to form a new raiding party of about 2,500 soldiers, known in history as the McCook raid, the raid on which I was taken prisoner.

Trusting that whosoever may read this little volume, will make due allowance for any shortcomings on the part of the writer, is the sincere wish of

Yours Truly,

WILLIAM HENRY LIGHTCAP.



## CHAPTER I.

### EVENTS WHICH LED TO OUR CAPTURE.

After thirteen and one-half days of hard riding, almost night and day, along by-roads, cow-paths and through blackberry patches, the Rossau raid was completed by a return to our lines at Marietta, Ga. That night a very heavy picket line was needed along the west bank of the Chattahoochee river, and I was detailed as one to help form that line. The Rebel pickets on the other side, who were behind breast-works, kept up an almost constant fire all night long, but as we were some distance apart and the night very dark, but few accidents happened.

My tent mate was about two hundred yards in the rear, where my horse was left in his charge. During the night an almost spent ball went through one hind leg of his horse, struck him on one knee and rolled down on his blanket. His horse was ruined. He was lamed and therefore could not go on the raid of which he and I had volunteered to form a part. It was fortunate for him, for his knee was but slightly bruised. As all had for some time seen constant, hard service, it was not deemed proper to command us to go, but we were asked for volunteers, therefore it was strictly a volunteer command. About one-third of my company and about the same proportion of all the cavalry regiments there, volunteered. A pontoon bridge company went a few miles down the river in the morning to place a pontoon across, below the rebel lines, for us to cross on. We followed a few hours later. When we reached the place the bridge was about half completed. Our command consisted of about 2,500 men. We were previously warned that this was a very dangerous undertaking, for the object was to enter the Rebel lines from twenty to twenty-five miles in the rear of Hood's immense army for the purpose of cutting off his communications and supplies. While waiting on the bank of the old Chattahoochee for the completion of the pontoon bridge, we were given a chance to go back if we felt that we were too much fatigued for the undertaking or that our horses were too much run down. About 200 availed themselves of the last opportunity and went back to Marietta. About 6 p. m. we crossed the

river into Rebel territory. A winding road led up to the top of a high bluff and a short ride beyond, to where the road forked. One branch led to the south, the other to the east. A sign board with an 'index finger' pointing to the east, the direction we were to go, read "Five miles to Hell!" Undaunted by the warning, we laughed and continued on our course. About sundown we came to a small town, a station on a railroad. As we were not permitted on such expeditions to burden our horses with extras, such as a change of shirts, blankets or provisions, we were always on the alert when entering a town, for something to comfort the inner man for a meal or two. In the outskirts of the little village we were approaching, I noticed a small building in the rear of a residence that reminded me of similar ones I had seen before, which almost invariably turned out to be smoke houses. I quickly alighted, tied my horse and investigated, but nothing was to be seen except a large box filled with ashes. I was disappointed for a moment for I was quite hungry and had nothing but a few hardtack in my haversack. I wondered why so much care had been taken with ashes. I shoved my hand down in them, struck something, pulled it out, and to my surprise had a well smoked ham. As I started for my horse others saw me and what I had; a rush was made and in a very few moments there was nothing left but the box and ashes. I had never heard of smoked meat being preserved in that way during the hot summer months, but believe it to be the best way, for flies cannot possibly get at it. I quickly strapped my ham to the rear of my saddle, mounted and soon caught up to my place in the ranks. A few minutes later we came to the depot and set fire to that and a large frame building filled with Rebel supplies. We then quickly formed in single file, counted off by fours, every fourth man held three horses besides his own, and the rest went to work tearing up and destroying the railroad.

For the benefit of those who never saw soldiers tear up and destroy a railroad, a slight account here may interest them. One would naturally think the process would be slow, but it was done as fast as a horse could run. One set of men with hand spikes would turn over one length of rails, other sets back and forward would turn over other lengths as far ahead and back as the eye could reach. The ties were then easily knocked off, piled up cross ways, the rails placed on top and the pile set on fire. The heat would soften the center of the rails so that the ends with their weight would bend to the ground and thus destroy them for further use. As soon as the pile was fired, that party would rush for their horses, mount and ride as fast as their horses could run until ahead of all at work, sometimes two miles distant. A constant stream of other squads would be riding still further ahead and so continue until the desired amount of track was torn up. We tore up there about ten miles of track in one hour. We then all returned to the village and started on our journey east.

We had marched but a few miles when we discovered in the timber by the roadside, what proved to be later on, the advance wagon of a large

Rebel forage train, in all about 500 wagons. Each one was covered similar to an emigrant wagon. With each was four mules and from two to four men. The mules were unharnessed, tied to trees and the Rebs had retired for the night in the wagons. The entire party, numbering about 1,500, were taken prisoners without firing a shot. The last were not taken much before daylight for they were strung along the road for miles.

As fast as they were taken they were compelled to mount the mules and come with us. We burned all the wagons as fast as their occupants could dress and get out of them. Had we turned back when the last wagon was destroyed it would have been one of the most successful and profitable raids in history, for among the prisoners were many commissioned officers who were out for recreation and benefit of their health. One was a major-general, two brigadiers, many colonels, majors, captains, etc. But instead, we kept on and just at day-break came to another town on another railroad. There seemed to be no one stirring in the place so early, but up the track a half mile in the direction of Atlanta, we saw a train stop and about one thousand Rebels dismount. As we were close to the town, we thought best to rush in, take it and then whip the regiment that had just arrived. We were very much surprised to find about 8,000 Rebs secreted behind buildings waiting for us. As we were so greatly outnumbered, we were forced to retreat and sacrifice our prisoners and the 2,000 Rebel mules. As the country between Atlanta and where we crossed was quite level, the burning buildings, railroad ties and the forage train, so illuminated the heavens that it attracted their attention at Atlanta, and they could determine the course we were taking. They had undoubtedly been sending down troops nearly all night to cut us off, which they very successfully did.

We fell back about a mile southwest of the town in the borders of the timber, and as there was not any apparent demonstration on their part, we concluded that we had sufficient time to prepare and eat breakfast. As there were so few hams and shoulders secured in the town we passed through the evening before, we divided with those who had none, and it took all we had to give each a scant breakfast.

I had about four quarts of corn meal in my haversack, which I had secured the evening before, and gave the same to my horse. That was the last feed the poor fellow had for four days. We made coffee in our quart cups but before it had sufficiently cooled to drink, all the Rebels were upon us. That breakfast was the last meal we had for more than six days. At the first volley from the enemy, we quickly gathered up frying pans and coffee cups, strapped them to our saddles and mounted. We returned the fire, but being so greatly outnumbered, we slowly fell back on a road leading to the southwest. We soon learned from their firing that they were behind us and to the right and to the left of us; they had formed in the shape of a horse shoe with us in the center. With their superior force, we were obliged to follow that road leading deeper and deeper into the Confederacy. We had a restraining force that commanded their respect, including two

pieces of flying artillery, which kept them at arms length. When at times they would attempt to to crowd us hard the artillerymen would plant those pieces and shell them a little. We were at all times careful of our ammunition for we carried but little with us on such expeditions, the object of which was to destroy and do as little fighting as possible. They continued to drive us for three and one-half days, when we reached a small town by the name of Newman. During this time we had been constantly in the saddle day and night. We realized our chances were becoming less hopeful the deeper we were driven into their territory and the only resort left us was to make a desperate attempt to escape.

After a brief consultation of the leading officers, Brig.-Gen. McCook and the colonels, we planted our two pieces of artillery on a high hill about a quarter of a mile from the heavy timber west of us on somewhat lower ground. We fought that portion of their force so hard that they had to concentrate their forces there to keep us from escaping. No artillery ammunition had been used up to this time, although both guns were loaded. As a ruse to draw them out of the timber, we fell back down the hill a few steps, apparently out of sight, which led them to believe we had abandoned the artillery. They made a double quick run to capture those pieces and when they had covered about half the distance from the timber, our artillerymen rushed up, touched them both off, and we quickly followed and opened fire. They soon turned for the timber, the artillerymen constantly shelling them until the ammunition was all gone. We then spiked the two pieces, quickly formed in single file and went in the opposite direction down a ravine as fast as our horses could go, leaning over on their necks to escape a light fire from the pickets on either side. A run of about a mile brought us to a main road leading northwest. We quickly formed in four ranks and struck out for the Chattahoochee river, twenty-five miles away, as fast as our hungry and jaded horses could carry us. A number of those faithful animals were called on, under the circumstances, for more than they could endure and while running fell dead or dying.

We reached the Chattahoochee about eleven p. m., to find that the owner of a cable boat, who probably had heard our artillery fire in the afternoon and surmised that we would come that way, had filled it with rocks and sunk it to prevent our crossing the river. While as many as could got at it to raise it, the rest were on the top of the bluff to protect them. Seeing a corn crib not far from the road in a field, a few of us went to it and secured some corn for our horses. It was risky to feed them much after so long a fast, so we kept the balance until about daybreak, when we were informed that the boat was raised, the pulleys on the cable and all in shape to take us across. The boat would take 100 men only at a time, but as the river at that point had a very rapid current, the boat crossed and recrossed in quick time. When 100 would fill the boat, we would march forward to fill up the space. The room between the river and the bluff was about sufficient for half our number. In their haste to get us on the other side, we were not



permitted to cross our horses that way, but would take off bridles and saddles, drive them into the river, stone them until they got a good start and with saddles and bridles get onto the boat. As I was a member of the rear guard that day, my turn to cross came among the last. In the spells of rest we had between loads, I let my horse eat the few ears of corn I had left.

Before sun-up the Rebels had overtaken us and were on top of the bluff firing at the boat loads crossing. As is almost invariably the case when shooting at an object far below, the balls pass over and do no harm. So it was in this case, although after we had all landed on the other side and marched some distance from the bank of the river, the angle being much less, a few stray shots did their deadly work.

When the boat was returning for the last of us, I stripped my horse of saddle and bridle and drove him into the river, kept him moving for the other shore until he was nearly 200 yards out. Only about one-half reached the opposite bank, for being so fatigued, many drowned in crossing and many more when out from 100 to 200 yards turned around and went back. My horse was doing so well I felt sure he would get there. The boat with the load I was on gradually overtook him. I kept my eyes on him from the start for fear that another might get him when he landed, for many were wading into the river nearly to their necks to get anybody's horse that was nearing the shore. About the time we pulled up along side of him, to my utter disgust and dismay, I saw him turn back and land at the starting point. I then lost sight of him forever.

In the army we became so attached to our horses that to lose them was almost like losing a brother. That was the turning point that landed me in Andersonville prison. I often wished I had done as did Col. Brownlow, of the First Tennessee cavalry. He stripped his clothes off, strapped them to his saddle, started his horse in, grabbed hold of his tail with one hand and followed him across. The river was more than a half-mile wide with a swift current, but that would have made no difference to me, for I was an excellent swimmer, trained to it from childhood up and could have easily crossed had my horse drowned before the other shore was reached.

When all had landed we sunk the boat so that if the Rebs wanted it they could fully appreciate the time we had in raising it, besides they would have to cross the river to do so. There were no more than half enough horses to mount us. Some had other's horses, and many a hot discussion arose, not only between the owners and those who had possession, but between their respective captains. If Gen. McCook had possessed the good sense that Col. Brownlow had, or done as the colonel wanted him to, all would have been well and avoided any discussion relative to the horses. Col. B. wanted the mounted ones to ride five miles and then dismount and let the others ride that distance and change about that way until our lines were reached, which would have taken all safely through, even though it was supposed to be 175 miles distant, besides there was a possibility of picking up enough horses in two or three days to mount all. But McCook,

I think, was a little scared. He said: "We will go with the mounted and the rest will have to look out for themselves. We did look out for ourselves a few days and then the Rebs looked out for us. We will never forget the noble colonel, but twenty-one years of age, but every inch a soldier, a son of the famous Parson Brownlow, who always spoke his mind, although residing in the midst of Rebs and often threatened, but never daunted.

The last night with my horse, in riding through some timber, my hat was knocked off by an overhanging limb and although I searched well for it in the darkness, I was unable to find it. Bareheaded on that extremely hot July Sunday morning was hard to bear, but the thought of walking 175 miles in our fatigued and almost famished condition, to reach the Union lines did not improve our gloomy forebodings. The horses were so nearly worn out that they could not go out of a walk, but that was a little too fast a gait for us. They gradually gained, but we would sometimes break into a slight run in our anxiety to keep up. Oh, how hot we were. My uncovered head felt almost as though it was on fire.

About five miles from the river we crossed a creek, and, although it was not using good judgment to do so, many of us laid down in it, clothes on, and rolled over in the water to cool our almost burning bodies, and then started on a trot to get nearer the mounted ones. But there was a limit to our endurance. Without food for more than four days, we were too weak for such a task. Squads of four, six eight and ten, and sometimes more, were falling out every two or three hundred yards, some to the right, others to the left, and going back into the deep woods to rest and plan to obtain food. I struggled on until nearly all of my dismounted comrades had disappeared. A dear friend of mine, Thomas Allen, who belonged to the same company I did, Co. E., Fifth Iowa Cavalry, was mounted on a horse that seemed to be almost exhausted. He insisted on me riding his horse a few miles, and by staying by him and changing often, he thought the horse would take us both through. I was so nearly exhausted that I accepted the invitation. I rode up a long hill and then I looked back to see how far he was behind. I was astonished to see that Tom was quite lame. I could not bear the thought of entertaining his proposition for a moment under the circumstances, so I jumped off and would not ride further, although he earnestly insisted that I should. I saw that it was useless to try to keep up, so seeing a squad of seven fall out to the left, I went with them. This was about four p. m. We went back about a mile from the road into the deep woods and laid down to rest. Almost instantly we were sound asleep and it was about nine o'clock the next morning when we awoke. To our surprise we were laying in mud and wet leaves nearly half way up our sides. There had been a heavy thunder storm during the night, but we were unconscious of it until we awoke. We had then been without food for five days, except a very few crumbs of crackers we had in the bottom of our haversacks, which we had eaten more than five



days before. Our first thought was of something to eat. One comrade had four small onions. His good, generous nature prompted him to divide, so each had half an onion for breakfast. We realized that our greatest danger was in visiting a house to obtain food, but what could we do?

We took our bearings from the sun and struck out as near as our judgment would permit for the north. Our object was to stick to the woods and keep as far distant from the roads as possible. We found lots of ripe blackberries which we ate freely of for a few moments, but our empty stomachs soon rebelled and we could eat no more. Some time in the afternoon we were astonished to see a road on each side of us, and from the angle they were running we judged they would come together within half a mile. This placed us under the painful necessity of crossing one of them to get away into deep timber. We concluded to cross the west one and approached it for that purpose through a marshy ravine. We knew it was risky, for all the roads were patrolled by old citizens too old to enter the ranks, Rebel soldiers and blood hounds, for they were aware that very many of us were in the woods. I was a few steps in advance of my companions and when I reached the fence, I placed one foot on a rail, raised up and glanced quickly up and down the highway. On the brow of the hill south I saw three blood hounds and three men horseback coming in sight. I instantly signalled the others to lie down and quickly dropped into the wet marsh myself. The grass was high enough to conceal us, still we could see our enemies pass by. The hounds were about four rods ahead of the foremost horse and rider and the other two about six rods behind. We distinctly heard the one in the lead say, "Come on, come on, there's no danger here." When they had passed over the hill north, out of sight, we lost no time in crossing the road and getting at least a mile from it. We congratulated ourselves on our extreme good luck in not crossing before they came up, for we certainly would have had trouble. Each one had a revolver loaded, but the loads had been in so long and we had been so much exposed to wet weather that it was doubtful about their going off if we were obliged to try them, besides it would have been very poor policy for us to kill one or more of our pursuers, for being so far from our lines, they would have followed us in large numbers to our death. As it was possible for another patrolling party to cross our tracks before the close of that day, we took the precaution to wade in every stream we met with.

We made good headway until darkness set in. We intended to do better by night while our enemies were asleep, but in that deep, almost dense timber, it was impossible to keep our course. We tried it about two hours after night-fall but stumbled over dead limbs and fell over logs so frequently that we had to abandon it till daylight. We tried to sleep and did get some rest but were frequently aroused by unearthly yells from wild beasts. The woods were infested by timber wolves, black bear, panthers, wild cats and probably lynx. I suppose it was on account of our number that they kept at a safe distance. Just at the break of day we heard a cock

crowing in the distance, and guided by the sound, followed in that direction. We disliked to go to a house, but were so weak from hunger that it was a necessity and we had to make the venture. We soon got near enough to see a log house in a small clearing. There was a grassy lane between the fence and timber. We sneaked up to within about two rods of the lane to take a view of the surroundings. We saw just inside of the yard and near the house, four or five women looking intently at something a Rebel soldier had. He was probably eighteen years old. We could see no other man and no other house, so concluded in our desperation to not lose this opportunity for a square meal. As their backs were toward us and their attention so rivetted on what the Reb had, we quickly crossed the lane, bounded over the fence and had them surrounded before they realized that there was a Yank within a hundred miles.

The Reb made no effort to get away, but we had a hard time to prevent the women from escaping to the timber. How wild and frightened they looked in their desperate efforts to break through our little circle. We tried to talk with them and convince them that we meant them no harm and it was some moments before we could quiet them sufficiently to do so. The scene reminded me of pictures in our early history, which I had often looked at when a boy, of women trying to escape from the Indians. We had been described to them by the Rebs as the most hideous beings on earth, with cloven feet and horns like the devil, and they, in their ignorance, believed it. They recognized us by our blue clothes and in their excitement thought they had fallen into desperate hands and all would be killed. When they found they could not get away they piteously begged us to not kill them. We told them that we meant them no harm. All we came for was something to eat. Then one said, in broken sobbing tones, we will give you all we have if you will not kill us. We replied that we did not want what they had, we simply wanted breakfast. After they were assured that we were not such bad men, they went to the house, built a fire and soon had on skillets making corn bread and frying smoked side meat. I told the others to go into the house hold, the Reb, and I would stand guard. The articles that so much interested them were some belts, cartridge boxes, etc., the Reb had picked up, which some of our boys had thrown away to lighten their loads. As the women had by this time become pacified, talkative and friendly, I walked to the gate where I could look up and down the lane, for we had to be always on the alert to prevent surprises. Nearly a quarter of a mile east I could see two or three houses, but no person in sight. To the west about one hundred yards there was quite a hill, and at the foot of it there was a house, the chimney of which I could just see. I had stood there but a few minutes when a quite handsome young lady came from the house and very pleasantly entered into conversation with me. Her introductory remark was "Why you'uns all look just like we'uns." I said we are one and the same people, that I had an uncle who was a colonel in the Confederate army and two of his sons were in the Federal army. She had

wholly recovered from the scare and became very talkative. She asked me where I was from, how far it was from there, how many sisters and brothers I had and what I thought would be the result of the war. She said it was too bad that there was a war and hoped that it would soon end. I agreed with her. There came a call from the house to come to breakfast. I told my comrades to sit down and eat, that I would stand guard while they did so. In a few minutes I saw an old woman coming over the brow of the hill, from the west, dressed in deep black, with a black veil that concealed almost her entire features. I quickly called the girl's attention to her and wanted to know what that meant. "Oh," she replied, "she is an old lady that lives at the foot of the hill. She has a son grown, who is sick all the time in bed. She has seen you'uns and is coming to talk with you. She is a friend of you'uns and is for your side."

She walked near the opposite side of the lane, apparently not noticing us, but when directly opposite she stopped, turned her face toward us and in a commanding tone said, "Young man, come here!" I went over to where she stood and in a whisper she admonished me to place no confidence in that girl. Her father and brother were in the Rebel army and her whole sympathy was with that cause. "I have a son in my house at the foot of the hill, I have to keep him in bed when neighbors and Rebs come near, under the pretense that he's sick, to keep him out of the Rebel army. He is as healthy and strong as you are, but he shall never fight against his country. If I could only get him across the line where he could join the Union army, which he would like to do, and fight for that dear old flag, I would be happy. Do not confide in those people, all are Rebels at heart. I hope you will succeed in getting back. God bless you and good-bye." She then started for home and I went back to my place inside the gate. The young lady asked, "Now isn't she a friend of you'uns all?" I replied that she seemed to be.

About that time my companions came out and called me to breakfast, said they had finished and would stand guard. It is impossible to tell how I relished that corn bread, fat side meat and buttermilk. To fully appreciate such food, as I did, it is necessary to go without food as long and have such an appetite. I believe I relished it more than any meal I had ever eaten up to that time. I hardly knew when to quit. Is it any wonder, considering the time we were without food? The women continued to cook and when I had finished there was a large platter full of fried meat and two large steaming pones of bread. I looked longingly at what was left and politely asked, "Have you lots of corn meal and bacon?" "Oh, yes, we have lots of it, don't be afraid to eat all you want." "I have done so. Would it be asking too much to let us have what is on the table cooked to take with us? We would not ask it, for you have been very kind to give us such a generous breakfast, but our danger lies in going to houses for supplies and we do not wish to be compelled to do so oftener than possible." "Oh, no, take it, we'uns have plenty." I thanked them, stood each pone on

edge and divided it with a long knife, through the center. I placed half the meat in one pone, half in the other, then poured all the grease that was in the platter over all, put the parts together and with a cart-wheel under each arm, thanked them, bid them good-bye and walked out of the house. When my comrades saw me they roared with laughter at my audacity, as they understood it, but when I explained that I did not take the ponies without permission, they thought it was all right. As we did not consider it judicious to leave our prisoner behind to collect help and hounds to follow us, we took him along partly on that account and partly as a guide, for he knew the country well. He stood in fear of the threats we made, should he lead us into danger and did well for us, for he led us clear of houses and roads.

At about 4 p. m. we arrived at a point on a very high bluff where we had a commanding view of a fine valley, in which was a mill and a few houses near it. We sat down there and partook of the first food since morning. We allowed our prisoner to help himself and while eating, he said, "If you will remain here until dark you will find a bridge a quarter of a mile west, where you can cross over to that mill. A nigger is the miller there and he will do all he can for you. He will furnish you provisions sufficient to last you a number of days and probably will guide you in the night a number of miles from there." We pretended that we would do so. We did not feel that we could trust him and therefore wished to deceive him, for it might be possible that he collected a squad of Rebs and some blood hounds that night and went to the mill in anticipation of taking us in, but if he did so his efforts were fruitless. As he was so far from home and the day so far advanced, we concluded to let him go. He thanked us for our kind treatment and wishing us success in reaching our lines, bade us good-bye. We watched him until he was out of sight, then quietly continued our journey north. We marched as long as we could see and laid down and slept as soldiers sleep under such circumstances until morning. We breakfasted sparingly of cornbread and bacon to make our scanty supply go as far as possible, for nine meals out of it the afternoon before made a large hole in it. We made very good time that day considering that we were always on the alert for highways and trouble. When darkness set in so that we could not see to travel, we were probably twenty-five or thirty miles nearer Uncle Sam's lines. We finished the balance of our food at noon and had not enough to make what we called a square meal, so had to lie down to rest without supper. During the night we heard hideous sounds which made cold chills creep over us. We distinctly heard the cry of a panther, which is a good imitation of the cry of a child. I had heard of and read of panthers' cries and their purpose. When human prey was discovered their cries were to draw a person to them and from their position on a large limb of a tree, pounce down and kill him. We also heard what we believed to be bears' growls. We got but little rest that night, for we sat up with cocked revolvers prepared for an attack that never came.



How we longed for an opportunity to kill one bear. Had we been so fortunate we could have carried enough meat with us to do us until we reached our lines, for we would be relieved from the danger of visiting houses and certainly could have got through all right. Just at daybreak we heard what we longed to hear, a cock crowing in the distance. As we were quite hungry we followed the sound that led to a house after about fifteen minutes walk. Before we had quite got there we came to a simple path that led right to it. It was on about two acres of clearing surrounded by a low rail fence and all surrounded by very heavy timber. We thought we had struck an ideal place, for nothing but that path led to it, and undoubtedly we were right had we taken proper precautions.

When within about two rods of the fence we noticed an old man with his head drooped and his hands behind his back slowly walking toward us. We stopped until he nearly reached the fence and turned to walk away, when we silently but quickly bounded over the fence and in an instant had him surrounded. The old rascal showed not the least surprise. He was as calm and collected as though nothing unusual had happened. He stood erect and said, "Soldiers in blue, are men after my own heart," and taking each by the hand said "Welcome! Come in the house and rest yourselves." As we followed him, he said, "I suppose you are hungry and your object in calling here is for something to eat." We said that was just it. We were then passing the cook house, which in the south was invariably a detached log building from one to three rods from the house proper. In this case it was near the latter. He stepped inside and said, "Mother, there are eight good boys in blue outside the door who want something to eat as soon as possible. Can you prepare it for them?" She replied, "Yes." Then he said, "Boys, come in the house and rest yourselves until breakfast is ready." We followed.

His was built in common with other southern houses; a double log house, a roof extending over the entire length, but about one-third in the center was open space, built so for comfort in hot weather. When we had stepped upon the floor of this open space he opened a door leading into the north apartment and politely requested us to enter. One comrade besides myself protested, stating that we preferred to sit outside where we could be on the lookout for surprises. He argued that we would be more safe inside under his patriotic protection, where we could not be seen if any Rebs should pass that way. After he saw we could not be induced to enter he brought out some chairs for us. The above mentioned comrade and myself preferred to sit on the east steps where we could keep a close lookout east, north and south. Developments later proved that had we obeyed the wish of that lying old traitor and entered that room all he need do was turn the key in the door and have us secure until help arrived. He had a son in that room, a large powerful man, who probably had a gun in his hands and as soon as we had entered would have had command of the situation, and what could we have done? 'Tis

true he was born without fingers and for that reason was not in the Rebel army, but without doubt could fire a gun. We did not know he was in there until developments later revealed the fact. We noticed smoke ascending from the chimney of the cook house very soon after sitting down, which led us to believe that she was going to get us breakfast. Right after, the old lady went to the south-east corner of the enclosure to a spring and got a bucket of water. It looked like business and we were satisfied with the prospect. To convince us of his loyalty the old man related his experience. He said his home was in Florida but it got too hot for him there on account of his Union proclivities and he moved to that secluded spot in Georgia timber where he would not be molested and there he should remain until the war was over.

He was entertaining the six sitting on chairs and seemed to impress them that he was all right. Considerable time had passed and the other and myself thought breakfast should be ready, so we walked to the cook house to see how the old lady was getting along. Imagine our surprise when we entered. There she sat smoking a pipe, without a skillet, pot or pan over the fire. She had made no effort whatever to prepare us a meal. We asked what she meant by such deception. She said, "I can never do anything in the morning before smoking." We then remembered that when we entered the yard we saw a girl about ten years old. What had become of her? We had not seen her since. We thought we saw through the whole plan. She had been sent by the old woman to the neighbors or some Rebel post to arouse all the help possible to capture us. The old man could not have done so, for we were with him all the time. These thoughts ran through our minds with almost lightning rapidity. Our suspicions were aroused and some satisfactory explanation must be given us at once. The old man had followed us, for he knew we surely would suspicion something wrong. He was a shrewd old rascal and wanted to be on hand to explain. We asked the old man what it all meant. He made the same excuse, that she could never do anything in the morning before smoking. We demanded an explanation of what had become of the little girl. He said she often went in the timber in the morning to pick berries and seemed to feel bad to think we would be suspicious of him "as true a Union man as any of us." "Don't be alarmed, gentlemen, this is a secluded spot and you will not be molested here." The others seemed to be contented and took in all the old man said without a suspicion of deception. My companion and I had not much more than got back to our position on the steps when I saw a squad of Rebs approaching from the north-east and others from all quarters within range of my eyes. I took in the whole situation at a glance, sprang to my feet and yelled, "Look out, the house is being surrounded," and at the same time bounded to the rear, ran across about four rods of vacant space, leaped the fence into the timber, ran about a quarter of a mile, sat on a log and listened a few minutes for others hurrying away, for I wanted company. I could not see one or hear

a sound, therefore concluded that all must have been captured. When I gave the alarm the door to the north apartment flew open and out sprang the almost giant to assist in capturing us. The old man threw out his arms in an endeavor to catch me. I was under good headway instantly and sprang at the old fellow and landed him one in the face that sent him to the floor in a heap, sprang over him, and as I crossed the space to the timber and for fifty yards beyond a regular volley of shots were fired at me. Lots of them whistled close to me but I escaped without a scratch. It gave me great satisfaction to know that I knocked the "claret" out of the old hypocrite. I was destined to make the rest of the journey, if possible, all of one hundred miles, alone. Imagine yourself, as near as possible, in my position at that moment. A mere boy, alone in that deep, dense timber, so dense that the sun's rays could scarcely penetrate, and infested with savage, wild beasts. But I had no time to ponder or lament over the situation. I thought less of the danger from wild beasts than of being captured and taken to Andersonville prison, from which I thought there was no escape only in death.

I hastened on, some times walking, some times running, until I reached a place a mile or more from that house, where there was a cool spring branch, where I laid down and quenched my thirst. I then sat down on a log, took out my diary, which I had kept from the time I had entered the service, to complete it up to date. Although it was a clear day, I could barely see to write so dense and dark it was. I had scarcely noted down in a few words, enough to bring to mind again the experiences of the past twenty-four hours, when I heard sounds that almost chilled my blood. It was the deep, bass baying of the blood hounds. They had placed them on my track, and not much more than a mile behind me. They have naturally very deep, heavy voices, but in that timber the sound was terrifying. I knew there was but one way of escape and that was to wade in water. I instantly jumped into that branch, waded four or five rods and away I went on a run. Fortune favored me. In less than a quarter of a mile I came to another branch, waded into that and ran again. In about the same distance more I came to the third and again waded. About this time the hounds ceased to bark and I knew where they were. They had reached the first branch, lost my track, but in a few minutes, by surveying up and down from the branch, they had reached a point sufficiently distant to strike a dry trail. On they came again, howling as loud as ever. By this time I had descended a hill, came to a creek, jumped in and waded some distance. They ceased their howling again when they got to the next branch and that was the last time I heard them. The men with them understood my game and called them off, for it was useless to follow me under the circumstances. With wet feet and clothing to my knees, I struggled on, when about noon I came to a clearing of about thirty acres, covered with corn. As this was in July, and I was as much hidden in that as in heavy timber, I continued on my course and when I reached the top of the hill

I came to where once stood a house. There were a number of peach trees there loaded with fruit not quite ripe. I ate a few, when my empty stomach rebelled. I was right close to some more timber and took to the woods again. In about a mile I came to another clearing covered with corn. I was on high land, and in looking to the east and west I could see that it was about the same distance to timber, about two miles. It seemed a waste of time to go out of my way so far for the sake of being in timber, but I much preferred it for the sake of my bare head, which was suffering very much from the heat.

I could look north to timber, on another hill, about a half-mile distant, but south of it was corn on land sloping toward the south. The corn field I was near was sloping the other way, which indicated that there was quite a ravine between and probably some houses. After a few minutes deliberation I concluded to continue upon my course north and traveled through the corn to the foot of the hill. There was a meadow of over one hundred yards in width between the two fields of corn. Directly in front of me, across the meadow, a house stood and on the east side of it were two women with a large kettle making soft soap. If I could only get behind them. I could see some more houses some distance east, but was not much concerned about them. The grass had probably been cut about the last of May, for there was a second growth of about a foot in height. The house was surrounded with trees and I could see that there was a heavy growth of gooseberry and currant bushes along the south fence between them. I could not be seen from the yard. I could not see a dog around the place and being so tired and hungry, I concluded to make the venture.

I laid down flat in the grass, reached as far ahead with my hands as I could, grasped as much grass with them as possible and pulled my body about two feet. I continued in this manner, occasionally glancing toward the women to see if they had noticed me, until I had snaked myself across up to the southeast corner of the yard.

I was within thirty feet of the women and could distinctly hear every word they said. I knew from their free conversation that they had not noticed me. I soon got beyond their view and into the corn and felt safe as far as they were concerned. I walked as fast as I could and soon reached timber again, which I followed. About half-past four I came to a log house standing on about an acre of cleared ground near a ravine. I got into a thicket near the fence where I could watch and ascertain about how many were there. I stood there about ten minutes and saw only a lone colored man washing windows. As I was satisfied he was alone, I walked near the fence where he could see me when I attracted his attention. I whistled and he looked up and saw me. I beckoned him to come to me and stepped back a few paces into the woods. He came and his first question was, "You'se a Yank, hain't you?" "Yes," I replied. "Betta be mighty careful, one of you'es dun been captured right oval dare yessa mawnn'," pointing to a thicket about one hundred yards distant. "Well," said I,



"there's no time to waste. I want you to get me something to eat as soon as possible." "Dare's nuffin to eat in dis house heah. Massa done built a new house up on de hill and me and my ole woman am gwine to lib in dis one" "Where is your woman?" "She's keepin' house at de new place for massa and missus" "Can not you go up there and get her to give you something to bring to me? I am very hungry." "Well, Massa, I'll done gone and try. Heah, Massa, you lay down in that thicket and when I done got back neah you I'll whistle a little so you'se will know who's done cumin'." "Hurry now, for you know it is not safe for me to stay here long." "Dat's so, Massa. I'll soon be back." In about ten mnutes I heard a low whistle and there he was with a plate filled with victuals. It contained a lot of boiled greens, about a half-pound of fat pork that was boiled with them and a half pone of corn bread, knife and fork. While eating I made arrangements with him to have his woman cook enough to fill my haversack and for him to go with me until midnight as a guide. If nothing had happened to prevent us carrying out those plans, I would have had enough food to have lasted me through and without doubt should have reached our lines in safety, for the only danger was in visiting houses for food. The woods were a shield and I could not be found in them. He was naturally quite talkative, for he was very much interested in the result of the war, for he, like the rest of the slaves, knew that if the north was victorious they would have their liberty. Where they got their information was a mystery, but all understood the situation. In his enthusiasm he forgot and sometimes talked in a tone a little too loud. I cautioned him once or twice, "For," said I, "some Rebs might be patrolling a road near by, overhear us and result in my capture." My prediction proved too true. In a moment I heard something snap like a dry limb broken, looked up and there stood a man of about sixty within fifty feet of me with rifle in hand, who commanded me to surrender. I had no thought of it, for I thought he was alone. I quickly whipped out my navy revolver, intending to give him battle, but instantly heard other voices behind me commanding me to drop that or they would kill me on the spot. I realized it was useless to resist so many who had their guns aimed right at me and so dropped the revolver. They commanded me to throw it beyond my reach, which I did, then ordered me to take off my eartridge belt and throw that also. When I did so they came up and the terrible fact was thrust upon me that I was a prisoner of war. This would not have been so terrorizing but for the reputation of the place I was doomed to enter. I had eaten nearly all the greens, part of the pork and about half of the corn bread.

## CHAPTER II.

## CAPTURED—FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

They ordered me to get up and go with them. I held to the corn bread, intending to eat it. One saw me take a bite and yelled, "Throw away that nigger bread," and at the same time knocked it out of my hand. "If you was as hungry," I replied, "as I am, you would be glad to have it." They took me about a mile to a house by the road that was built differently from any I had seen in the south. It resembled in shape a long hay shed such as are common in the north, only it was built of logs and plastered inside. There were only two doors, one on each side directly opposite. The entire interior was one vast room. When I entered they placed me a seat between the two doors. At each door a guard sat, so I was pretty well caged. What a surprise to me when I saw a house full of women, at least fifteen. Nine were young women from sixteen to twenty. Almost instantly after I took my seat, they all arose and stood in a semi-circle and stared at me without uttering a syllable. They stood in the same position for ten or fifteen minutes, all the time looking intently at me. It was somewhat embarrassing but I had to take it. I supposed they were trying to discover those horns the Rebs had informed them that all Yanks had. In the meantime a little boy and girl, about six and eight years of age, had disappeared and came back with their little hands full of peaches and summer apples. They walked right up and offered them to me. Some of the women seemed to be shocked at the nerve of those little innocent ones to walk up to a live Yank. Others laughed outright. I took a part of their fruit, thanked them and told them they were nice little children. That seemed to please all and broke the spell, for when they heard me speak so they could understand, they believed I was not all animal, but part human. Then they plied the questions. One old dame asked in a drawling manner, "Where in the world did you come from?" I replied Wisconsin. "Wisconsin? How in the world did you ever get down here?" I said that was easy. I came on the railroad. Then one of the young ladies said, "We'uns thought you'uns all were horned critters, but you'uns look just like our boys."

The old men guarding the doors had undoubtedly pictured us, as we had been pictured to them, to the women as being but a little above brute creation and felt called upon to make amends in some way, so said, "they are not all like this one." We soon became better acquainted and chatted freely. Perhaps I had been in the house an hour and a half when one of the old men asked, "Are you hungry? It looked like it the way you ate that nigger bread." I said I was. "Wall, you gals go and get this soldier something to eat. They disappeared by going out of the east door and into the kitchen about a rod away. In the meantime I answered the many questions propounded by the old men and women. In about thirty minutes I was called out to supper. I sat down to the best meal I ever had in the south. Those kind hearted young ladies had made delicious wheat biscuit, a hot pone of corn bread, boiled potatoes, elegant fried ham, and all cooked in skillets, for they used no such thing as a stove. Only the very wealthy planters had them. Besides they prepared fresh ripe tomatoes, sliced green cucumbers spiced in pepper, salt and vinegar, besides a pitcher of fresh, cold buttermilk; tea and coffee the south could not get during the war. Cold buttermilk though I much preferred and it is far better.

All in that household, old and young, stood in a circle around that table all the time I was eating, not as guards to prevent my escape, but to see how a Yank ate. I was not much embarrassed, for I had been so many days on so little that my appetite demanded my whole attention to the food before me. How I did enjoy that meal! When I had finished all went back into the house except the young ladies, who had to clear up the table and wash the few dishes, but they were soon with us. The old men resumed their respective places at the doors as guards. The young ladies put questions to me as fast as I could answer, such as, "Have you any brothers and sisters?" "How old are they?" etc., etc. Finally one asked, "Can you read?" I answered in the affirmative. She proposed to test me and ran for the largest book in the house, a primer. Oh, how my sympathy was aroused for those poor girls! Born and raised in a republic where they should have had all the advantages of free schools, grown up to womanhood in ignorance just because the detestable aristocracy of the south regarded them as but little better than their slaves. They called them the poor white trash, and no doubt considered it to their advantage to keep them in ignorance. It seemed so at that time, for the poor whites were doing their bidding, fighting, and those too old for that purpose running down the Union soldiers so unfortunate as to be in their timber. The very ones kept in ignorance longed for an opportunity to educate their children, were, through their ignorance, assisting a cause that had always kept them down, and if successful, always would. The wealthy class had their private teachers and would to this day, had they been successful in perpetuating slavery for all time, and therefore no common school would ever have been established in the south. Those girls would compare well in looks, form

and natural intelligence with an equal number of northern girls.

Well, I had to read. In a few minutes I had read aloud all there was in the primer. With the rapidity I read it all were astonished. I could hear the old folks saying in low tones, "Why he is edecated. We should keep him here to edecate our gals." They were anxious to have their girls educated and the girls were anxious for it. They then asked me if I could write. I informed them that I could. One ran for writing paper, pen and ink. I had a splendid Spencerian gold pen, gold mounted holder, and case for them. I used my own, asked each one in turn her name, wrote it, cut it out and handed it to her. Each looked long with a wistful look, which seemed to say, "I wish I could do that," although it was all Greek to them.

Shortly after I entered the service I had one dozen photographs taken, with my soldier clothes on, at Nashville, Tenn. The photographer said he would preserve the negative and at any future time I wanted more he would send them to me. I soon sent the dozen to friends in the north and to comply with requests, some time after, disposed of another dozen in the same way. About three weeks before I went on the McCook raid, I had a number more requests from lady friends for pictures of myself and concluded to have a dozen more. I ordered them sent to Marietta, Ga. I knew that, should we not go there, I could have them forwarded to my regiment. As it happened, when we returned from the Rossau raid, we came right into that town. As I was there only one day and had but little time to write letters, I sent three only, and had nine left, just one apiece for those nine young ladies. I was aware that all I had would be taken from me when I confronted a provost marshal and much preferred to give them to those girls. I took them out of my pocket and handed one to each. They had never seen a photograph in their lives, neither had the old folks. To say they were surprised would be putting it mild. Each would look at the picture and then look at me, and exclaim, "Why it looks just like you! How in the world could they take your picture on paper?" I then showed them pictures of my mother, sisters and other lady friends. They thought it was all wonderful. During all this I could hear the old folks planning to keep me there to "edecate their gals."

I was rejoiced to know that they wanted me to stay, but doubted their ability to hold me, for if they had reported me to the authorities, they would have to turn me over to them. At this juncture the "gals" were ordered to prepare another meal. They had not had supper and said they had put it off so late so that I could eat again and sit down to supper with them. How kind and thoughtful they were! I could not have been treated better by any friends with as limited means. While the "gals" were getting supper I had a talk with the old folks about keeping me there to teach their girls. I told them I would do the best I could for them and advance them as fast as possible in their studies and would also teach them to write. They expressed a strong desire to keep me but were afraid they could not



for they had reported right away after they took me to the provost marshal at Roanoke, Ala., and wanted to know what they should do with me. They were ordered to take me there early in the morning so that I could be sent with some more prisoners they had to West Point, Ga. They said they wished they had not been so hasty and got acquainted with me. They could have fixed it up with the others who helped capture me by letting their children attend the school. I asked them why they could not dress me in homespun and let me escape to some place they might designate, where I could remain in hiding until all had blown over and report that I had escaped in the night. That plan amused them and they thought it would be all right, but after thinking it over seriously, they were afraid they would be punished for supposed negligence. They expressed their regret to do so, but could see no way out of it but to deliver me at Roanoke as directed. We were called out to supper. It was about 9:30 p. m. It was a repetition of the other meal. The "gals" were doing the best they could for their guest. They had a long home-made table sufficient to accommodate all. We had a real pleasant time chatting about the north and south, but not once did they intimate their prejudice.

When supper was over we all collected in the one great room, parlor, sitting room and bed room combined, to spend nearly an hour more in conversation. I ascertained the cause of so many women being in one house. As the Union forces advanced and gained territory, many families in sympathy with the Confederate cause deserted their homes and went far back in the rear to the homes of relatives and friends. Those in that house, I believe, were all related. As I knew I would be searched the next day and everything of value taken from me, I presented the girls with my gold pen, holder and case, much preferring that they should have them than any heartless provost marshal. They were delighted to have them, but said it was too bad that I was compelled to part with them. It was becoming quite late. One of the old men proposed to go to bed. There were but four beds, one in each corner of the room. One long continuous bed was made on the floor for the girls and the two little children. The old women occupied the beds in the north end, the one in the southeast corner was intended for the old men and the one in the southwest corner was assigned to me. The old men were supposed to take turns in sitting up to prevent my escape, but, judging from the conversation I heard in whispered tones before I went to sleep, I believe both went to bed after they were satisfied I was sound asleep. They said they did not consider it necessary to sit up for they believed I would not try to get away. I had their confidence and under any other conditions it would have been treacherous to betray it. They were good and kind to me but felt it their duty to deliver me over to the Confederate authorities, which meant either a very long spell of intense suffering or death, probably both. It was my last chance and I resolved to avail myself of it, but before I realized it I was dead to the world and did not wake until I was called to get up to breakfast. My power of endurance

had been taxed to that extent, through the loss of sleep and the lack of food, that I could not resist nature longer, try as I would.

When we had finished our early meal the sun was hardly up. The two old men had brought their horses around to the door and were ready for the march. It was six miles to Roanoke. I shook hands with all and bade them good-bye. All expressed their sorrow in parting that they were instrumental in delivering me into the worst place of torture on earth. They expressed their hope that I would live through it and if I did they wanted me to visit them and stay as long as I would, it would not cost me anything. I often thought of doing so but circumstances prevented. It is now thirty-seven years ago. Those rosy cheeked young ladies of that time are now from fifty-three to fifty-seven years old, perhaps mothers and grandmothers, but I think it is safe to venture the prediction that they still have the pictures of that blue-coat that they think died years ago in Andersonville, and hundreds of times have shown them to their children and related the story in connection with them. I started on ahead and those two old men followed horse-back, each with a rifle. We marched at a good speed in order to reach Roanoke on time, but were too late. The prisoners they wished to take me with had gone an hour before. I felt sorry for those old fellows. It was shameful the way that provost marshal abused them for not having me there on time. They took it all without a murmur. It seemed as though the poor whites were under as complete submission to those in authority or the wealthy class as the poor slaves. The provost commanded them as punishment to take me to West Point, Ga., a town on the banks of the Chattahoochee river, twenty-five miles away. When we got out of sight of the town one dismounted and requested me to ride. I did so for about two miles and got off without being requested and asked the old man to mount. After we had traveled two or three miles more, the other got off and told me to ride his horse a few miles. We alternated in this manner, which made it quite easy for me. They expressed regret that they had not brought food with them; if they had known they had to take me clear through they certainly should.

About noon, as we were passing by a peach orchard, one of them requested me to get on his horse and he would get some peaches. I did so and asked him to let me hold his gun while he was gone. He reached it up and just before I had my hands on it, he smiled and pulled it back and remarked that he did not believe I would take any advantage of him, but it was not the proper thing to do. I was certainly innocent of any wrong intent, simply desired to accommodate him. At any rate I could not have had the heart to shoot either of those good, kind men, besides it would be bad for me if I did temporarily make my escape so many miles from the Union lines. We ate freely of the fruit, but it did not satisfy hunger like cooked food. About 2 p. m. we stopped at a gate where there was "The Old Oaken Bucket that Hung in the Well." One of them drew a bucket of nice cold water which he handed us with a gourd dipper. A scrawny,

hatchet-faced woman saw us from the house, came to the gate and, after a moment's conversation in a low tone with the one by the well, she turned to me and gave me the worse tongue lashing I ever had. I was not in a position to reply, so held my tongue. When we had nearly reached the brow of the hill where we might look down on the city of our destination, we met a Reb horse-back. He was of the Texas ranger stripe, which I sized him up to be. They carried the black flag, which meant no quarter, or, in other words, shot all prisoners. He stopped and said, "I see you have a blue bird," then turned to me and said, "You can thank your God that you fell into these men's hands instead of ours. We would not bother to take you to Andersonville." I said, "You are a Texas ranger, I suppose." "Yes, by God, I am." "Well, if ever I get out and into the service again and meet you, I will know what to do with you." "None of your d—n back talk or I will finish you right here," and he pulled out his revolver. My two guards and friends levelled their rifles at his head and ordered him to move on. "This man is in our hands and we shall protect him." He did move but almost turned the atmosphere blue in his trail with a string of oaths. They kept their guns on him until he disappeared from view around a bend in the road. As we went down the long hill and entered the town, hundreds of Rebs were sitting on the sidewalks. Occasionally one would rush out to the middle of the street where I was and accost me thus: "Hello, Yank, give me your pocketbook." "What kind of a knife have you?" etc., etc., but before he could go any further one of my guards would get his gun in position and order him back. They protected me all the way until we reached the provost marshal's office. They followed me up a flight of stairs into the presence of the aforesaid coward and scoundrel and then were ordered like two dogs to go. There were three or four desks against the wall and as many clerks with their backs toward me. There was a railing at the head of the stairs about six feet from the stairway. I stood in this space. The provost was a person about thirty-five years of age, and, judging from his appearance, never did a day's work in his life. He came outside of the railing and went through all my pockets. He took my diary, the pictures of my mother, sisters and other lady friends, my pocket knife, money (which was only a nickle, for I had not been paid off for months), in fact my all.

He went back to a desk, spread out the pictures and called his clerks to look at them, and there all stood in my presence making vulgar comments about my own dear sisters and lady friends. My blood almost boiled with rage. Although a prisoner I denounced them in thunderous tones as brutes. The provost commanded me to shut up or he would shoot me and pulled his revolver. I told him no one but a coward would shoot a defenseless prisoner or make such vulgar comments about his sisters and lady friends. Reverse the situation and how would you like it? He called a guard and told me to go with him. "I will not," I replied, "until I get those pictures." "You go or I will kill you where you stand." "They tell me I am going to

my long home and it would probably be a blessing to die here defending the honor of my loved ones rather than endure the trials of Andersonville prison and die at last." He again commanded me to go with the guard. I replied that I would when he gave me those photographs. He said I should anyway. I said I would not alive. He then moderated and said he would send them to me in the morning. I asked, "Why don't you do it now?" "I want to look over those papers you had first, but go along and you can depend on it you shall have them tomorrow morning." I said, "promise me faithfully and I will go." He did so and I went. That morning has not yet come. My reader may wonder at and doubt such apparent reckless bravery. It can not be called bravery. I was driven to desperation by the slurs cast upon my sisters. Put yourself in my place and realize that you were bound for a place where thousands of as able-bodied soldiers as ever lived had withstood the tortures and trials of hades itself until their physical and mental strength could endure no more and died. What assurance did I have that my fate would be different? I had no hopes of ever living through it. Then why should I fear instant death in defense of right and justice? There was no exchange of prisoners. The Federal officials at Washington would not exchange without the Confederates would exchange the colored prisoners also. The latter claimed them as their property. The only alternative was to go to prison and remain there until the war closed. How long that would be no one could tell. It looked as though it might last for years. The average life in Andersonville was less than six months. Life is sweet, but at that time I should have welcomed death.

The guard took me across the street, up a flight of stairs on the outside of a brick building, turned to the left into a hallway, and when about half way down the hall to the right was a large door hung on wheels and a heavy iron bar across it. The guard took down the bar, shoved the door to one side and I entered a room where were thirty-three others. The door was closed and barred and I was for the first time imprisoned, from which there was no escape. When I entered the room seven comrades arose and took me by the hand. Not to congratulate me, but as an act of sympathy. They were the same seven with whom I wandered through the woods and were captured at the last place we went for food and where I was the only one who escaped. As there were no seats in the room we sat on the floor and told our experiences. They said it was surprising what a lot of Rebs that little girl collected in so short a time. "She came back soon after we surrendered." They could not understand how I escaped through the volley of shots fired at me, besides the house was almost instantly surrounded after "y u gave the old man a good poke, which pleased us but we did not dare show our pleasure. He had a horrible looking face and would have been glad for an opportunity to kill you. It only partly paid him for his duplicity." They thought when the blood hounds were put on my track I would get the worst of it.



After the exchange of experiences I took a survey of the premises. There was but one window for the room. That was in the north end, without sash or glass but iron bars instead like a jail. The room was entirely vacant as far as any kind of furniture was concerned. On the east side, about five feet from the floor, there was a sliding door about two feet high and three feet long. A guard stood there in the next room watching us all the time day and night. As I had partaken of no substantial food since early morning and had marched thirty-one miles that day, I had a very keen appetite and asked my comrades when we would get food. They said, "No more until 4 p. m. tomorrow." That was not consoling, but there was no help for it and I had to wait. Our room seemed to be a Rebel guard house. There were just seventeen Rebs in there and seventeen of us. When we laid down at night we completely covered the floor. It was nearly suffocating when lying down, for the window was so much above us. When morning came I longed for 4 o'clock. When that time came there appeared a number of women in the next room at the hole in the wall to see us fed. The guard stood with a large platter covered with bread and boiled beef (tough neck). Both bread and beef were cut up in chunks about two inches square. When all was ready he yelled, "Pig! pig! pig!" and threw the whole into the center of the room on the floor. Thirty-four men dropped to the floor and scrambled for it, the strongest getting the most. All that was on the platter would not have made meals for one-third our number. How the women slapped their hands with delight! It was really funny, but not for us. In a very few minutes our food was gone, and we had to wait twenty-four hours for the next.

That evening there were two more Rebs brought in. Rebs? Well, we will call them that for the present, for they were dressed in butternut clothes. Each had a basket about the size and shape of our market baskets. They sat down in a corner near me and soon we engaged in conversation. I asked, "Why were you brought here?" Evidently they had been sick, for both were quite pale. "We have had quite a spell of sickness, went home on furloughs for thirty days to recuperate and stayed a little over our time, for we were not able to leave home and report. We should be home now for we are not fit for duty." They got close to me and in a low tone said, "We wish we had the pleasure and honor of wearing a blue suit like yours." I was astonished and asked, "Do you mean it?" "Yes, indeed we do." "How is it you are members of the Rebel army?" "We could not help ourselves. We could not get away with our families to the north where we could enter the Federal service and were forced into the Rebel army, but no Union soldier was ever harmed by shots from our guns, for we always shoot high. We know many others who were forced like us to take up arms against the stars and stripes who are just as loyal as you and ourselves." I took them by the hands, thanked them for their patriotism and extended my sympathy for them. They expressed their sympathy for me, for they fully realized the punishment I would be compelled to endure

in the place I was bound to enter. They asked, "How often do you get rations here?" I told them. "How much do you get at a time?" I said, "That is hard to say on account of the way we receive it," but I explained to the best of my knowledge. "You certainly must be very hungry," and both opened their baskets and told me to help myself. They were filled with nice food from their homes. I begged to be excused, "for," said I, "you will need it all yourselves." "No, we will not, for our appetites are poor and we will get out of this tomorrow. Now help yourself or we will not like it." I ate one or two nice ham sandwiches and fibbed a little by expressing my satisfaction at what I had eaten. The next morning they insisted on me eating with them and would not take no for an answer. That helped me wonderfully and I stood it very well till 4 p. m., when I again assisted in amusing the women who came to see the show. During the day my two Union friends in Reb attire departed, before they had a chance to witness the scramble for food. As near as I can remember, we were there a little over a week, when we were taken out on a Sunday, placed in box cars and shipped south.

We arrived at Columbus, Ga., county seat of Muscogee county, in the evening just as people were coming from church. The lieutenant who had command of us, wanted to show off and put us through the drill where the street was wide, adjacent to the market square. Hundreds watched the performance. He swelled up like a toad and had an expression that seemed to say, "Didn't I do it! I captured them by myself by surrounding them." After he had become tired (we certainly were), he marched us around to the opposite side of the square and took us to the provost's office. We were searched again but the picking was slim. They had no place to confine us but the county jail. The provost, mayor and one or two more held a consultation in our presence to determine what to do with us. The mayor thought it was a shame to put prisoners of war in a jail. We were surprised to hear any person express such sentiment in that country, for all seemed to think there was no place bad enough for us. As they had no other place for us, there we had to go. We thought it rather humiliating when we had done nothing worse than fight for Uncle Sam, but when inside a few minutes, we rejoiced at being so fortunate, for soon after we were turned over to the sheriff and locked up, he came inside and expressed his sorrow for us and said while we were in his charge we should receive the best possible attention. He said he had ordered our supper, which would be ready in a few minutes. Then came in the mayor of the city. Each supper was brought in on a separate platter and the very best the market afforded. It was a meal that would cost there in Confederate money about \$15.00. We had all we could eat, and that was no small amount, for that was our first from the day before at 4 p. m. After the platters and dishes were removed we had time for the mayor and sheriff. They understood each other. They stayed with us until about midnight, discussing the result of the war. Those two men were as loyal as ourselves, but said

they could not express themselves at that time in that location. I remember of hearing after the close of the war how loyal that mayor was when our troops approached Columbus. He surrendered the city without a shot. My regiment, the Fifth Iowa Cavalry, was with the command when Columbus was surrendered. The mayor at last bid us good-night, but came again the next morning. How consoling it was to meet such sympathetic friends deep down in the enemy's country. We had three first-class meals that day. We had the freedom of the jail and interviewed the prisoners to learn the cause of their confinement. Two Englishmen had been in there for three months because they would not join the Rebel army, but expected their extradition papers from England most any day. We all expressed a strong wish to stay there. The sheriff said he wished it was within his power to hold us, and he would not keep us in solitary confinement. We had a visit from the sheriff's wife, who extended her heartfelt sympathy. We fully appreciated their kindness, which we never shall forget.

We were taken out about sundown, marched to the depot and placed in a box car. We sat down close to the door for about thirty minutes to give the people a chance to gaze at us. On the platform was a very pretty, light-complected girl with long golden hair, about fifteen years old, with a basket of choice fruit on her arm, sent there on account of her attractive beauty to sell to passengers on trains and others who desired to purchase. She stood gazing at us for some moments, and all at once we noticed tears running down her cheeks, and with one bound she was in the car and right in our midst, emptied the contents of her basket and quickly turning walked slowly away, sobbing as though her heart would break. Many there were touched by the scene. One person came to us and volunteered the statement that she was a slave and on account of her attractiveness was sent to meet the trains to sell fruit. That gave us the key to the situation. She was undoubtedly obliged to account to her master for every cent's worth of fruit disposed of. Her heart overflowing with sympathy, inclined her to give it to us. She did not know what course to pursue at first, but following the inclinations of her heart, placed herself subject to her master's will. Poor girl! There was not one among us but would have defended her to the utmost if it was within our power and, if necessary, taken the whipping for her. The train was about to pull out, the door closed and locked and we were in total darkness. We laid down on the floor to pass the time away, if possible to sleep. We noticed the floor was very sticky but gave it but a thought. About midnight we were transferred to another train and put in another box car, and in that rode till daylight. When it was light enough to see we noticed the difference in the color of our clothes. That sticky substance in the first car was molasses, leaked out of barrels probably unloaded just previous to our entering it. In the last car there had been cotton and enough left to give us a good coating. Molasses and cotton, instead of tar and feathers. We looked very much like sheep. During that day we came to a small town

where we stopped about an hour. To the right of the track and within three rods of it was a small hotel where the bill of fare was advertised on a pole. It read as follows: "Corn bread and common doin's, 25 cents; wheat bread and chicken fixens, 50 cents." As we were progressing toward Andersonville we intersected a number of railroads which brought in prisoners from the east and other parts, and before we reached our destination our train had over three hundred prisoners.

We landed at Andersonville about 4 p. m. The place was very small to be so noted, but it was the prison that gave it such a world-wide reputation. There was the depot and only three or four houses, which made up the town. I think all were occupied by the Rebel officials who were in command there. We were marched from the train to a grassy spot in the rear of the depot and toward the prison, which was about a quarter of a mile further on. From this somewhat elevated piece of ground we had a commanding view of a portion of the enclosure. The enclosed ground looked like it was covered with an almost solid mass of dirty black hogs—no resemblance to human beings. The stockade enclosed the north side of one and the south side of another hill, divided by a small stream, probably only a spring branch. By standing on one hill outside of the stockade the other side of the enclosure was quite visible. About one-third of the enclosure was on one side of the branch and the balance on the other, in all about twenty acres.

The infantry prisoners were separated from us, formed in two ranks and ordered to call off, which proved there were more than two hundred of them. The Rebels then went through all their pockets in search of valuables such as money and watches. They would not take their pocket knives, tobacco, photographs, blankets, tents, etc. After they got through with the infantry they turned their attention to us. We were ordered to line up in single file and count off, which proved there were just ninety-six cavalymen. We were ordered to strip to our skin, place our clothes in a pile to our right, with a double guard around us with orders to shoot the first man who moved a muscle. They searched every seam and pocket of our clothes and took everything, even pocket knives and tobacco, no matter how small, also photographs, which would be a source of comfort for the possessors to look at but of no value to them; every poncho, blanket or tent, if any were so unfortunate as to have them, and all the time cursing, damning and calling us vile names, just because we happened to belong to that branch of the service that required us to raid their country, live on it in the meantime, cut off their communications by destroying their railroad and telegraphic lines, burn their supplies wherever found, etc. They had cavalry that raided our possessions and did the same, but that was different in their estimation. Our service was just as honorable—it was warfare. All had to be done that would injure the enemy. After they had left us but our mere clothes,—rags in my case and many others—we were permitted to dress and all start for the prison. A heavy

thunder storm came up, so they marched us but to the first battery that commanded the north side of the enclosure, and there we remained for more than an hour in a very heavy rain. Through the mud we were then marched across the creek to the north gate, where we were turned into the worst prison that was ever built by civilized men.



## CHAPTER III.

## ANDERSONVILLE PRISON—A LITERAL HELL ON EARTH.

When new prisoners entered Andersonville it was customary for those long confined to collect around them for news, for it was their only means of obtaining any in regard to the progress of the war, which was of vital importance to them, for they felt that the end of hostilities was their only hope of release. I had only got beyond the dead line when a number approached me. I stepped to my right and close to the dead line, which I knew nothing of, and answered to the best of my knowledge their many questions. Being quite tired and weak from hunger, for I had been without food since we left Columbus the evening before, I rested myself by placing my arm on the dead line. Instantly they pulled me away some feet in what I thought a very rude manner. In explanation they pointed to a guard in a sentinel box who was in the act of taking the musket from his shoulder. I asked what it all meant. They explained that Captain Worz offered a premium to any guard that would kill any prisoner caught even touching the dead line. The premium was a furlough of thirty days to visit his home. I never forgot my narrow escape and thereafter kept clear of that line. I saw two or three shot after that for doing that same thing. Another time I was standing within a few feet of a comrade shot at for that trivial offense. The guard missed him and split another's head open, who was lying on the ground in range of his gun. There was nothing thought of that by the Rebs and probably he got a furlough. I asked the boys when they usually got rations. They replied, "Usually between 3 and 4 p. m. each day, unless something turns up to rile Capt. Worz, then it would be very uncertain, sometimes not for two or three days." This in time I found to be true, an example of which I will furnish later on. The thought of going without food nearly twenty-four hours longer was not encouraging, but there was no remedy for it and I had to submit in patience. I wandered around the little time I had before dark, seeking a place to lie down. All over it was muddy and there was no choice, but most of the boys had gone to rest and room was scarce, for the prison con-

tained 30,000 prisoners and when all were at rest every foot of ground was covered. I at last found a vacant space just large enough to accommodate one person and took possession. In about an hour I was shaken by a comrade who said, "You have got my place." I asked, "How do you know?" "Are you a new comer?" I replied, "I am; came in today." "That explains it. We are divided off into divisions. Each division is composed of one thousand men and occupy a specified space. That is divided in ten parts, called hundreds, the same as we call companies when with our regiments. Each hundred is divided into four parts, called messes, of twenty-five men each. In the mess you draw your rations. Tomorrow morning you must find out what division, hundred and mess you belong to or you may lose your ration." I said that would be too bad, for I had already gone more than one day without food. "That is nothing uncommon here; you will get used to that." Was not that consoling? I thanked him for the information and left, to find some unoccupied place. I wandered some time before I found it. On the wet ground, with an arm for a pillow, I fell asleep, and could I have awakened in the morning, and found myself where my dreams carried me, I should have been happy. I was at home, feasting on the best in the land. I awoke in the morning, hungry, damp and numb. I had nothing to do but eat and as there was nothing of that kind in sight I had plenty of time. The first thing on the program was to find out where I belonged. About 7 a. m. the Rebel sergeants came in to call the roll, to learn if any had escaped during the night. Even at that they were sometimes fooled, for if one had been so fortunate some comrade would answer to his name. I approached one calling the roll and asked him if he could assign me to some mess. As lots of the boys were dying, he soon found a vacancy and took my name. Oh, wasn't I happy to belong somewhere in that contemptible pen! I was assigned to mess three, fourth hundred in fourth division. All of the members of a mess were numbered, so that when issuing meat, which it was impossible to divide equally, it could be called off and there could then be no dissatisfaction. For instance, after it was divided into twenty-five piles, anyone could turn his back and as the mess sergeant pointed to one pile and asked, "Whose is this?" the reply would be No. 1, No 2 and so on up to No. 25. The rations of meal and beans were divided by measure.

As it was a number of hours before rations, I walked around until I was tired, seeing the condition of the prisoners and trying to find some of my company or any person I knew. Some of my company were in there but I could not find them that day. I sat down on the ground to rest without any protection from the hot sun, even for my bare head. Such sights as I saw among the prisoners were enough to dishearten any one. Some with nothing but a coat, others with a pair of pants only and some with pants and coat but no shirt. All were not so clad but very many. Very few there, unless some of the new prisoners, would be presentable in company, and none if considered what they were covered with. I made the

statement that I had nothing to do but eat and that but once a day, but the way I had to scratch before the close of that day, taught me that I had another duty to perform if I desired to live a reasonable length of time. I found that I was like all the other prisoners, completely covered with gray backs. That was the name given them in the army, but properly speaking they were body lice. They look like the ones our mothers used to comb out of our head on our return from school, only they were about three times as large. They were actually so plentiful that on a bright warm day they could be seen moving around on the ground. I had to do like other prisoners, take my clothes off once a day, turn them inside out, and pick and kill all I could find. It was surprising how many we would get at a picking, but I will relate that part of my story later on.

At last the big gates swung open, a four-mule team entered pulling a wagon load of tight barrels filled with something steaming hot. What could it be? An occasional prisoner, starved to desperation, could be seen climbing on the wagon while in motion, quickly thrust his hand into the black mess, grab a handful and disappear, eating as he went. Police, with their short clubs followed the wagon to keep such off but in spite of them some would succeed in getting a handful. Just think to what desperation they were driven through hunger! I have seen the police knock them off with their clubs and almost kill them, still they would risk their lives to gain a little of that mess that it would be a shame to call food. The Rebs called the mess hog peas, but they were small black beans, cooked as they were pulled, vines, pods and all together. Near the northwest corner of the stockade there was a cook house where they were boiled in very large cast iron kettles. A short distance from the stockade, near the creek, on the west side, there was another where the corn bread was made of corn and cob ground together. The meal was mixed with water, just as though it was prepared to feed chickens, no salt or other seasoning, and baked. It was almost as hard as a brick and quite so if left one or two days. So much of this mess was left with each division. A division sergeant drew the rations for the thousand men, and for his trouble in dividing them in ten piles, he would take some extra. Each pile would go to the sergeant over the hundred. He would take a little extra for his trouble in dividing into four piles. Each pile of the last division would go to a mess. The mess sergeant would take a little extra for his trouble in making twenty-five divisions, but he was more than twice as deserving as the other two, for he had so much more to do and still would take much less. When I got my rations of beans I had the most repulsive mess I had ever seen. As I had nothing whatever to receive my rations in, the sergeant had to dump the little mess in my hands. I had to eat them forthwith to clean my receptacle for the next service. I do not remember the number of wagons they had and I would not say I ever knew, but this I do know, that the wagons they used for bringing in rations were the same they used for pulling our dead to the cemetery. They had to be stripped



to clothe living and in that condition were hauled in those wagons. The large, square-cornered loaves of corn bread were piled up in the same. Wagon loads of bread came in after that black mess of beans was served. The loaves were about two feet long, fifteen inches wide and two and one-half to three inches thick. It was cut into pieces about two inches square which constituted a ration of bread for one person one day. As we were so very hungry, each article of what took the place of food was eaten as received. The next in order was fresh beef. It took quite a while to divide what the mess received into twenty-five piles. As I had nothing whatever to cook with, when I got my ration (it was clear steak), I put it all in my mouth at one time, and not a large mouthful at that, chewed it and swallowed it. Thus my meal was over with and I had no more rations to bother with for twenty-four hours. Should any one doubt my statement in respect to the small allowance of meat please withhold judgment until later on I relate how much steak I was offered for a shank bone that hadn't a particle of meat on it. Cooked rations were the order of the day and far better for many, including myself, who had no cooking utensils. However, most of the prisoners were dissatisfied. They believed that those who had charge of the cooking to whom the meal and beans were issued, were robbing us, and therefore applied to Capt. Worz for raw rations issued direct. In about two weeks after my arrival we got all raw, and I could not see that there was much if any difference in the allowance. I had then to eat beans, meal and meat raw. Those who had anything to cook in were so reluctant to loan that I but seldom asked for the accommodation, but put up with it the best I could. The first experience I had with a ration of raw beans was amusing. They reminded me of hazel nuts I had often seen with holes in and worms inside. Nearly all had the hole, but instead of the worm there was a gray striped bug inside, fully half the size of the bean. I sat down and picked them over as I had often seen my mother do, discarding the bad ones. I was surprised to see some of the old prisoners picking up what I had thrown away. In all my mess I had but three sound beans left. I at once realized the fact that as the older prisoners had to come to it, sooner or later I must, and, as they expressed it, "the bugs ate the beans and we must eat the bugs to get the benefit of the beans." From then until the close of my prison experience I looked over no more beans but ate all that was furnished.

I had been in Andersonville about four weeks when one afternoon when the meat was being called off, I was sitting on a knoll close by with my elbow on my knees and my head in my hands, my mind far away thinking of better days; my number had been called three times without a response, so the sergeant looked at his list to see what name was opposite the number. When my name was called I responded promptly and, as I turned to leave, a tall and very spare man asked if he was mistaken in understanding my name was Lightcap. I replied that he was not. "Where from?" "Wisconsin." "What part? Grant county, near Hazel Green?"

"Yes, from that town." "Any relation to the miller there?" "He is my father." "What! This is not Billy?" "Yes, sir. That is what the boys at home call me." That man was Thomas Curtiss from the same town, a member of the Tenth Wisconsin. Boys brought up together, attended the same school and so changed that we knew not each other. He drew a ration in the same mess, not for himself, but his companion who he was messing with.

I showed him the spot where I layed down at night and went with him to see where he was located. He and his companion had a dog tent that would answer for two, and the latter was lying in it with his legs drawn up with the scurvy. He could not stand or straighten himself, therefore Tom had to draw his rations, cook them and wait on him generally. It was a blessing for me that he discovered my identity. When he was through cooking he often loaned me his pan to cook my rations in, and thereafter until we were moved from there I got along much better, even though part of the time I ate raw rations because I was so hungry that I could not wait. It was a great comfort for Tom and myself to sit down day after day and review our boyhood days at the times we went fishing and swimming in my father's millpond, etc. How often Tom expressed a wish (as many others did after, I met from my part of the country) that he could get at the bean pile in my father's mill. What a feast he would have! Our mess sergeant was an old prisoner, his system filled with scurvy and on his hands were a few dark blue blotches that had become almost running sores. When dividing the meat, his hand closed tight on the knife would draw the skin tight on the back of his hand and the dark blood would frequently run down his fingers and drip on the meat. At first I thought it was awful, but got accustomed to it and soon thought nothing of it.

The country around was densely covered with timber. Wood was issued as sparingly as though it was a very scarce article. Every third day each mess received three small cord sticks of pine wood. It had to be divided and issued out in the same manner as meat. Each person's rations for three days was about half the length of an arm and as large as the wrist. As it was usually straight grained it was easily converted into shavings and used sparingly to feed the fire while cooking. The custom was to dig a hole in the side of the hill about five inches deep, in length a little more than the width of the pan, so that a draft was formed, the pan put over and the beans boiled as long as one-third of the wood lasted and then the meal stirred in, the heat left being sufficient to cook the meal. Beans could not be half cooked. In cooking, as soon as the water got a little too warm for the comfort of the bugs, they would come out of the bean shells, swim to the side of the pan and try to climb out, but were always knocked back when the meal was stirred in. The mess looked like it was seasoned with whole black pepper.

During the months of July, August and September, Sherman and

Hood's great armies were often actively engaged at Atlanta. Many horses and mules were killed during these engagements. After the dead soldiers were buried these were shipped to Andersonville to feed us on. It was usually four, five or six days before they were dressed and issued to us, and I tell the truth before God, that the meat was green and slimy, half rotten, full of maggots and smelled so strong that a dog would have left it with disgust. How did we know that it was horse and mule meat? For various reasons. The grain of the meat was different. We could distinguish between the horse and mule meat; the bones were differently shaped, besides when we received beef it was always fresh and the heads and paunches were issued to us. Not so with horse and mule meat. We could eat that rotten meat, maggots and all, with a relish, and often ate it raw. For my ration of meat one time I drew the horn, eye and the piece of hide that held those two parts together. I asked a comrade what I should do with it. He said he drew a similar ration one day and it was all right. "Take the eye out and boil it, it will taste similar to an egg. Singe the hair off the skin, cut it in small pieces and boil with your beans. Boil the horn until it will slip off; the gristle inside is nice to chew." I followed his instructions and found his statement about right. I drew a small piece of a paunch one day. I took it to our dirty branch, washed and cleaned the honey-comb part with a stick the best I could and ate it raw. I mention these facts not from choice for I know it is repulsive reading for many, but to let good, loyal citizens know how we fared. I called the branch from which we got our supply of water dirty. One would not think a spring branch would be so, but when you realize the fact that 4,000 Rebs, the force kept there to guard the prison, were camped less than a quarter of a mile above on its banks and all the filth of their camp was mingled with the water, how could it be otherwise?

During a tremendous thunder storm, almost if not quite a cloud-burst, about the first of August, a nice, heavy-flowing spring appeared on the hill-side in the center of the neutral ground, between the stockade and dead line, and about seventy-five yards north of the creek, which ran parallel with both and emptied in it. As the neutral ground was twenty feet wide the spring was ten feet beyond our reach. We asked Capt. Worz to furnish us a trough made of a couple of boards or a hollow log, anything to convey the water under the dead line where we could get it, but he would not condescend to do so. That was called and has ever since borne the name of "Providence Spring." The Rebs never furnished us anything but the very slight rations once a day, just sufficient to renew our appetites, for when one has gone without food fifteen or twenty hours that craving appetite disappears and a faint and dizzy feeling comes instead. It was impossible in the mornings to get up directly on our feet. At first we would raise up and rest on an arm; everything would seem to be turning upside down and revolving over and over. In a few minutes, when accustomed to that position, we would raise to a sitting position. We would pass through the

same experience and have to brace ourselves with our hands to keep from falling over. Then to our knees and pass through the same ordeal. Then one foot forward and at last on our feet, often but to fall to the ground and try it again.

The Yankee ingenuity would assert itself, for some of that water must be obtained. We agreed to save out the choicest pieces of wood from the mess allowance to make staves, and when we had enough, make a bucket for our mess. For hoops we whittled pieces quite thin, soaked them in water until they would bend freely. We used the widest pieces for making the head. For a bail we used a heavy strip of cloth torn off some dead comrade's clothes. By tying a number of strips of cloth together we made a string which we tied to a pole made by splicing a number of pieces of wood, then by tying on the bucket we could stand clear of the dead line, swing the bucket over, dip it in the spring and get three or four quarts of delicious water. We had to be careful for the guards were always watching for an opportunity to get a furlough. We could not get water there often, for very many other messes had made buckets and were there after water also.

The stockade was composed of straight pine logs cut in lengths of thirty feet, barked and hewed on two sides so that they would fit close together. A ditch was dug all around the enclosure ten feet deep and the timbers placed on end with the hewed sides together, which made a solid wooden wall twenty feet high. On the outside about eighty to one hundred yards apart were flights of stairs leading up to platforms about three and one-half feet on the top with a roof to protect the sentinel from the sun and rain. The sentinel could rest his arms on the top and from his high position overlook the entire enclosure. I think there were forty-eight sentinels on duty there at a time. At 8 p. m. sentinel No. 1 would start the call of the hour which was kept up every hour of the night to prevent or discover any asleep on duty. No. 1 would cry, "Post No. 1; 8 o'clock and all's right!" Post No. 2 would cry out the same by substituting his number, and so the cry would pass from one to another until it was returned to the starting point. They would call in a sing-song tone, always giving the word "all's" the rising inflection. Quite often from midnight on, and sometimes before, the cry would stop and not be resumed until a corporal would wake up the sleeping guard.

The one constant diet began to tell on me as on the others. Scurvy began to show. Little dark blotches broke out all over me. As time advanced they grew larger and larger until often they would reach the size of a silver half-dollar. The cause of scurvy was the lack of vegetables. If we could have had a few potatoes, onions, carrots, turnips or beets to eat raw, it would not have appeared. Eating meat raw helped to keep it in check and therefore I most always ate mine raw for that purpose. We did not get enough to amount to much, but it helped a little and prevented it from advancing so soon to that advanced stage that we so much dreaded.



from which there was no hope for relief—gangrene. I saw a few there who had it. The flesh would turn as green as grass and in a short time slough off the bones and hang in strings like moss. In time I had the scurvy very bad. Besides the running sores on my body, my gums turned as black as tar and frequently bled. They shrivelled and receded, which left my teeth bare below the enamel and caused their loss by decay. With some, scurvy acted differently. It caused the cords of their limbs, more especially the lower ones, to contract and drew their legs up so that they lost the use of them. There were a few potatoes offered for sale at seventy-five cents apiece for medicinal purposes, but were beyond the reach of but few. There were a few who smuggled in a few greenbacks by sewing them in the lining of their clothes, but rest assured they were not cavalymen. Nearly all enlisted for the good of their country, but there were there a few prisoners who were as deep-dyed villians as ever went unhung, although six of the ring leaders were. They were of the very worse element from New York, Boston and other large cities. They did not enlist through love of country, but went as substitutes for very large sums of money, paid by very wealthy persons drafted. When in the first battle, they laid in ditches or hid in some other way on purpose to fall into the hands of the enemy, thinking their chances would be better as prisoners, for they depended on their knavery to carry them through with a good living. Two or three got in with enough to start small sutler stands. They bought their stocks of the guards at night. Some of the guards liked to do business; others would not. The would-be merchant walked as close to the dead line after dark as he dared, directly opposite a guard and yelled, "Hello, guard! Have you anything to sell?" If the guard was one of the speculative kind he would open up a deal on the spot, goods to be delivered when he came on duty again, four hours after he was relieved. The merchant would be on hand and under the cover of darkness the guard would request him to cross the neutral ground to the stockade and tie the money to a string he would lower. After satisfying himself that the right amount was there, he would lower a sack with a rope, in which was the article purchased. The guards made a big profit and the merchant charged accordingly. Corn meal and beans were from ten to fifteen cents per pint. New comers could not eat the rations, besides there was not enough to satisfy them, so they would patronize the stands as long as their money lasted. Those thugs would watch the stands to see who had money, then shadow them until dark and through some excuse get them to go with them to a flat of about two acres near the creek and the east side of the grounds. Those two acres were a veritable quick sand bed. Their money was demanded and if not forthcoming a knock on the head would settle them, their money and any other valuables were taken and the poor victim thrown into where, in a moment, he would sink from the sight of man forever and the crime concealed. Hardly a night passed but we heard cries from that quarter of "Murder! Murder!! Murder!!!" but they were soon hushed in death. How many were killed

and thrown in there God only knows. I frequently visited the place in daylight and, judging from the reeking, squirming mass of carrion bugs and worms, there must have been many. They carried on murder and robbery to that extent that an appeal for aid had to be made to Captain Worz. These robbers, on account of what they secured, lived well, were fleshy and strong and hard to master by us starved weaklings, but a vigilance committee was organized with new, strong men, and six of the leaders were caught and brought to justice. They were given jury trial, which decided to dispense with their services by hanging. Worz furnished the material, gallows were erected and the six swung off into eternity. There were no more yells of murder for a long time.

About the latter part of August there was a little incident that cut off our rations for two days. Corn meal and beans were brought in cotton sacks, similar in size and shape to the half-barrel sacks flour is sold in but heavier. A certain number was left with each division. After all those rations were brought, the empty sacks were picked up by the teamsters. One poor shriveled and almost naked prisoner saw an opportunity to take a sack, which he intended to convert into a shirt by cutting holes for head and arms. He did not suppose the sacks were counted when gathered. The loss was reported to Worz. He issued an order that no more rations would be furnished any of the 30,000 prisoners until the sack and the man who took it was delivered to him. Worz always took advantage of any excuse to save rations. The poor boy did not know what to do. He knew what it meant to be delivered to Worz. He would be placed in the stocks for forty-eight hours, which meant death, for I never knew of one to get out alive. Stocks were composed of two heavy planks two inches thick, one foot wide and sixteen feet long, supported on edge by heavy stakes driven in the ground near the ends on each side to support them. A half-circled notch was cut and another about a foot from that. These were a set sufficient for one person. A number of sets were cut on the edge of the board to secure a number, if necessary. The other plank had corresponding notches. The prisoner had to lie on his back on the ground and place his ankles in the notches of the first board, then the other was placed on top so that the notches in that would cover the top of his ankles. There he had to remain during the length of his sentence, if not relieved by death before, his feet a foot higher than his head, without bread or water, exposed to the sun's rays and rain alike, and as he could not turn or shift his position, blood naturally would rush to his head. Who could live through a siege of that kind? Why wonder at his hesitating to give himself up? He held out two days and Worz was true to his word—no rations came in. He saw that he had to come to it, so he sent a friend to the gate with the sack to offer it to the guards, thinking that might satisfy the demand. He was asked if he was the one who took it. He replied no. The guard said he had orders not to receive it without the one who took it. For the sake of a sack, worth but a few cents, that poor fellow had to deliver himself into



the hands of the greatest of all fiends to be tortured to death.

Pardon me for bringing in so late what I am about to chronicle. As I stated in or near the beginning, we were not allowed to take anything extra with us on raids. The shirt I had on when captured was old and I had worn it a number of weeks on raids through very hot weather, and soaked every day with perspiration caused it to rot. I had worn my suit a number of months on raids, rode almost day and night, frequently through blackberry patches. They were so nearly used up that I applied for a new suit just before leaving Marietta on the last raid, which of course I never got. I think it was the second day I was in Andersonville I went to the branch and washed my shirt. When I had finished I saw it was nearly washed away. Old prisoners laughed at me and told me I was foolish to wash anything in there, "for it will last no time if you do." It was so nearly in pieces that I could not keep it on me a few days later and I had to discard it altogether. My boots were completely worn out also and I had to throw them away. Then all I had left was a ragged pair of pants and cavalry jacket. Many were dying each day. There was hardly a mess that had not one or more at death's door. During the month of August, 1864, over three thousand died, but that was the greatest mortality of any month.

There was a hospital a short distance from the south end of the stockade where some were admitted if they thought they would die within twenty-four hours. It was composed of wall tents with bunks inside made of cane poles which were about a foot from the ground. I understood they supplied no medicine except what is commonly called sumac berries, which are very sour and good to check the scurvy. It was some advantage to sleep in a tent where the air was not polluted and all around green grass in abundance. The Rebel doctors came in twice a week to examine the sick to see who were near enough dead to be admitted. At roll call in the morning of the day the doctors were to be in, we were instructed to carry our sick over to or near the south gate. We had one in our mess who was so weak that he could barely raise his hands to his face to scare the flies away. It was the duty of the strongest in the mess to carry our sick over to the designated point. Three besides myself secured an old blanket and placed the poor fellow on it. Each took hold of a corner and started for the gate. He could not have weighed more than sixty pounds he was so greatly emaciated. We were the strongest in the mess, but so weak that we had to rest a number of times before we got there, not over two hundred yards from where we started. There were hundreds brought there and the stench was so great that we had to take turns in watching our patient and walk clear back to get fresh air. When a doctor got around he simply glanced at him and ordered us to take him away with the remark that there were many there worse. We carried him there three times before he was admitted, and then he died before morning.

When our man was admitted, a guard escorted us and we went out-

side with our burden to the hospital and for that service we were permitted to gather a brush little near by to take in with us for fuel. As about all had been picked up near the hospital, we induced the guard to take us north past the cemetery, where wood of that kind was more plentiful. As we went by we had an opportunity to see how the dead were disposed of. They dug a ditch four feet deep and six feet wide. Some were digging and some placing the dead and more shoveling in to cover them. A little beyond, toward the timber, I found a very nice pitch pine stick about five feet long and five or six inches in diameter. It probably weighed twenty-five pounds. Before I had reached half the distance to the gate I was completely exhausted, threw down my stick and dropped down beside it. The others had a handful of brush which did not worry them. And the guard insisted that I should keep up with them. I at last succeeded in getting inside, but as soon as I got beyond the dead line I took a long rest before I could proceed to my location. This is simply to illustrate how weak we were, although the strongest in the mess.

It was also the duty of each mess to deliver its dead at one of the gates on either side of the roads between the dead line and the stockade. The dead were all stripped of every piece of clothing (unless a string to tie their big toes together) to help clothe the living. It was nothing uncommon to see fifty to one hundred laid out in a day. Two persons with a four-mule team pulling a wagon similar to what was in use in our grandfather's days, would drive in, turn around and drive the mules far enough outside to leave the wagon close to the dead. One would take hold of the head, the other the feet, and with two swings throw the dead into the wagon promiscuously until it was full. Often we saw them start away with a head or limb resting against a wheel. They were hauled to the side of the ditch (I mentioned in the cemetery) thrown like sticks of cord wood into it, placed across it on their backs as close as possible and the ditch filled in. That work would last each day until ration time with the teams, but men were digging and filling in all day.

We have read of little tomb stones having been placed there since the war at the head of each one, with his name, company and regiment carved thereon. Undoubtedly the Rebs had the names of all who died there, for every morning the roll was called and a record could have been kept of the deaths, but when stripped and laid out by the gates, promiscuously, without anything by which they could be identified, thrown into the wagon like cord wood, tossed into the ditch in the same way, how could there be any knowledge of where Tom Jones or John Smith was laid? It is well to think so. It has comforted many a father, mother, sister and brother who went there and found the little stone with their loved one's name thereon, and in their assurance that in that hallowed grave rested their darling, decorated it with evergreens and flowers and with moistened eyes, knelt down beside it and offered up a silent prayer. Who knows the unbounded love of a mother? Who knows the sufferings of thousands of mothers who

had sons in that indescribable hell-hole? I judge others by my own. When I returned to my home I was told very often my mother would sit down to the table and before she had tasted of food, with eyes filled with tears, get up and go away and exclaim, "I cannot! I cannot eat when I know my boy is starving!" Although different, I believe her suffering was as great, or greater, than mine.

The first two weeks I was in Andersonville I wasted away very fast. Fretting was even harder on us than the lack of food. I have seen fine physical specimens of humanity die, some in thirty, some in sixty, and others in ninety days, all through fretting their lives away. And was it any wonder when on every hand, go where you would, there were sights enough to drive one crazy? Here one, a living skeleton, drawn up into knots through scurvy; there others lying flat on their backs, helpless as babes, their lives slowly ebbing away from dysentery; others, their minds entirely gone, nothing but skin and bones, flat on their backs with barely a stitch of clothing, some chewing with all their might in their imagination that they had something good to eat; others throwing their arms and in their delirium driving horses on the old farm at home, and all covered with vermin. I remember one poor fellow from Ohio who had a very good suit of clothes, and think he was not in there long, but that dread disease—dysentery—had reduced him to that condition that he was flat on his back and as helpless as a babe. Nothing to shelter him from the hot sun or rain. No one to protect him from torments of flies. No one to offer him a word of sympathy, and day by day growing weaker and nearing the end. He had a brother-in-law who occupied a tent within thirty feet of him and also had blankets, who had become hardened like many others there and would offer him no helping hand. I carried water for him to drink, drew his rations, borrowed a pan, cooked them and fed him four or five days before he died. I never saw anyone more grateful. He thanked me over and over again for what little I did and said when he died I should have his clothes. On account of his disease it was dreadful to be near him and probably that is why his brother-in-law did not take him into his tent and take care of him. He was about ten years my senior. When he knew that his time had about come, it was almost heartrending to listen to his piteous cries. "Oh, what will become of my poor wife and child! I can never see them and mother again!" When he was dead his brother-in-law claimed his clothes. I told him he had acted brutish and selfish and had done nothing for him and for what you have seen me do for him he promised me them. He was unreasonable and, although well clothed for that place, would have them. I assisted in taking them off. He had a good pair of shoes and when we took them off, it is almost too horrible to relate, live maggots rolled out of them, and on examination we found they had eaten holes in the soles of his feet before he was dead.

As I said before, I lost flesh very fast the first two weeks on account of worrying. I saw that it would not do. I could look around me and see old

prisoners cheerful, cracking jokes at their small rations, offering to bet a bean that they could get more gray backs at a picking, etc. How foolish it looked for me to allow my mind to wander back to home and its comforts when I could not get there. I resolved at once to be cheerful and encourage others to be; keep my mind off home and its comforts as much as possible and make the best of my surroundings. That resolution is what saved my life. A comrade who had a pan wanted me for a messmate. He had been a company cook when with his regiment. That suited me, for something to cook in was what I lacked. We had another very sick man in our mess and, after going through the same routine as before, we carried him out to the hospital. This time they cut us off on the wood question. The hospital patients, some who had got better, gathered around us for news of friends they had inside. They drew larger rations than we did and the most, having very poor appetites, had considerable corn bread on hand. I was given fully two-thirds of one of those large ponies of bread. As described, when we drew cooked rations, it was about as hard as a brick, but could be softened. I was rejoiced to think how happy my mess cook would be when he saw it. When I got back and asked my messmate what he could do with that chunk of bread, "Why," he said, "I can make the finest dish out of that you ever saw. You go after some water and when you get back I will make a nice pudding." It was quite a distance to the branch and when I got back, with his back toward me, there he sat making a pudding as fast as possible. He had eaten fully two-thirds of it. We dissolved partnership then and there.

One day in the fore part of September I was near the east side of our grounds when I saw a terrible rush for one of the gates. I hurried there as fast as I could and asked the cause of the excitement. I learned that there was a special exchange between Sherman and Hood of 5,000 western men. I fell in and had to move with the throng. Rebel officers outside counting them, made us move very slowly. When I was near enough to almost step outside, we were cut off and ordered back. They had enough. So near and yet so far! Could I have been exchanged then, how many days and months of terrible suffering I should have escaped. I was pleased to know that some of my friends got out; some who were not constitutionally strong and certainly would have died if they had to remain there much longer. It was not long after this that Sherman routed Hood and took Atlanta. Hood started on a circuitous route for Nashville, Tenn., which left no protection for the small force guarding our prison. We had to be sent away from there and to many places, divided in a dozen or more lots. Soon the call was for division No. 1 to go out, board a freight and go home.



## CHAPTER IV.

## SAVANNAH--NOBLE WOMEN OF THE SOUTHLAND.

Whenever and wherever the Rebs moved us, "All aboard and go home," was the cry. It was base deception on their part to induce us to feel contented and not try to escape, so that a less number of guards would suffice. In a day or two our division was also called out to "go home." We were placed on a long train of flat or stone cars. We could hardly believe it, but were in hopes that we would be taken to our lines. I do not remember the days but it must have been two at least we were on that train before we reached our destination, Savannah, Ga. The trains in the south at that time moved very slowly. Their engines were about worn out and as there were but few, if any, repair shops in their possession, they could not run on regular time. It was characteristic of the Rebs to never furnish rations in transit and it always so happened that when we arrived at a new prison we were always too late for rations that day. On the way to Savannah our train stopped about an hour in Macon. The depot there burned down a few days before and in the ruins there were hundreds of pieces of sheet iron about two feet square with which the roof was covered. The boys on cars near by got permission to gather up some of these to take with them, as the guards could see no value in them. When in Savannah prison they made good use of them. With stones they pounded them into the shape of pans which would hold about four quarts. Some brought along as many as a dozen and sold what they did not need to new prisoners or any who had the price to pay for them. Quite a number who had almost forgotten how money looked came into possession of quite a sum, such as it was, the day we entered the prison at Savannah.

We passed along one of the leading business streets of that city, which led beyond the limits to where the prison was, but not quite completed. We presented the most pitiable sight that the people of that city, or, I believe, the world had ever seen. It was really indecent to lead us through where women and children could see us. Many half and very many not half-clad with rags created such a sensation that more than five hundred

of the noble women of that city followed us to the prison gate with food and earnestly entreated those in authority to let them feed and clothe us. All would have been well provided for if permission had been granted. They plead with tears in their eyes as earnestly and as ever a mother did for a wayward child. But their tears and entreaties were of no avail. With hearts of stone every offer was rejected and the guards were commanded to bayonet any one that dared to give us a thing.

So near the sea, the land was as level as a floor and water was within a spade's depth of the surface. They could not build the stockade as at Andersonville. It was constructed by framing some light timbers, braced here and there, and nailing to it sixteen foot boards on their ends. When we arrived it was about completed, all but making the gates and hanging them. We sat on the grass outside about two hours with a strong guard around us. The women stood there with their baskets, determined to feed us. It appeared that one of the women was a wife of one of the guards, or at least well acquainted with him. She said, "John, cannot you let me give my basket of food to those starving men?" He replied, "I cannot." "What would you do should I pass you and do so?" "I should have to obey orders and bayonet you." "You would not do that?" "I should not like to, but would have to." She made a feint as though she meant to pass him. He quickly swung his gun in front of her, she grasped him by the shoulder, quickly pulled him to one side, sprang to the other and passed in, and exclaimed, "Bayonet me if you dare!" It was the signal for a rush and those guards amounted to no more than men of straw before that force of determined women. They kindly invited us to help ourselves, which we did with alacrity, for we were weak and faint from hunger. They sat down by their baskets and poured out their sympathy in streams of consoling words, such only as mothers could do. They asked us where we were from and did we hear from home, and how pitifully they expressed their sympathy for our poor mothers. We had all that was good for us to eat and felt very much better, but no better than those five hundred women did over their victory and the satisfaction of feeding, even once, one thousand starving men. The gates were completed and we went inside. There was no dead line as yet. The women were not yet satisfied. They went home and came back the next day. There were many knot holes in the plank that composed the stockade. The women gathered all around the outside and shoved through thousands of dollars in Confederate paper money, the best they had, and beseeched those who received it to divide with their comrades. Some furnished ten, some twenty, and some as high as two hundred dollars. Its value was very much depreciated but it would buy something of the guards at night. Very few, if any, divided, for I know I did not get any of it.

The prison was a small one, probably six or eight acres. The guards, instead of having sentinel boxes, had a plank walk about three feet from the top where they walked regular beats. More prisoners came in later—



more than they expected at that place—and they had to take in a few more acres to make room. Then the walks were taken down and sentinel boxes substituted. In about two weeks there were about 10,000 prisoners. When enlarged, they put up a dead line, also. The ground was so low and flat that the hot sun nearly melted us, for there was no possible way to escape its rays, and the stockade kept every breeze from us, therefore night was always welcome. Should it rain an hour steady, the ground would be covered with water and it would take a number of hours for it to soak away. The ground was always slightly damp, but preferable to Andersonville on account of the clean, green sod. In time, however, the grass began to fade and disappear on account of the tread of 10,000 men, and if we had been kept there much longer there would have been none. The rations were better and a little larger at first but were gradually reduced to about the size we had been accustomed to. About half the time we had rice in the place of beans, good clean meal and always good beef, but in small quantities. Each would have received a little more had not the Rebs formed a police force out of the largest, strongest and most selfish men inside, many of them thugs who belonged to that gang in Andersonville. We had no use for such a force, for the very men they chose were the ones we most feared. All the rations were issued directly to them. I often watched them divide them for the different divisions. Before any division was made, each would cut off from three to four pounds of the choicest for himself, when he knew he could not eat more than half of it, but had some other thug friend, not so fortunate as to be a policeman, who would get what he did not need. They would take of rice, beans and meal in the same proportion.

The Rebs were naturally lazy and would take out on parole of honor any able-bodied men capable of doing a fair day's work, to cut wood, butcher cattle or do their bidding in any other way. They would furnish them tents and blankets and enough to eat. This parole meant an oath that they would not go beyond the picket lines one mile in any direction from the prison. I never could believe that any of our men were justified in rendering any assistance whatever to the Confederacy. It bettered their individual condition, but did they not by so doing relieve just so many Rebs to be sent to the front? Three of those paroled went beyond the limits and tried to make their escape, but were tracked by blood hounds and brought back. We do not uphold any who violated an oath; we blame them though for taking it. I had many similar chances while in condition but, like nearly all the prisoners, did not think it consistent with the oath we took to fight for Uncle Sam. But because they took that oath and then violated it, is no reason why such extreme punishment should be meted out to them. They were brought in to the left of the gate, between the dead line and the stockade, to make an example of. They were tied up by their thumbs one hour just so their toes would barely reach the ground. Next they made each carry a scantling, about four by six inches and eight feet long, one hour and walk around in a circle. Three large, tight barrels were placed in a

row. They had to stand on them and hold up a sixteen-foot two-inch plank for an hour, with a piece of paper tacked in front of each which read, "I broke my parole." Next they were tied up by the thumbs another hour, carried the scantling another, held up the board another, and so continued and changed all day long without any intermission, food or water. If they had not been strong they never could have stood it. Such haggard faces I do not remember of ever seeing. Such tortures are brutal and unnecessary. They knew we were always ready to jump at the first chance to escape. Their men in northern prisons would do the same, but they had but one reason for doing so—their loyalty to the Confederacy. They had all they could eat, all the good clothes necessary, good quarters to sleep in and separate ones to cook in, bunks and blankets to keep them comfortable, stoves and fuel in abundance, and were never exposed to the weather. I know whereof I speak, for I had an opportunity to look into the prisons at Camp Douglas, Chicago and Rock Island, Ill.

The Confederates concluded to build a new prison at Millen, a small station eighty miles north of Savannah. They called on we prisoners for assistance. They said, "We want as many wood choppers and carpenters as we can get. You shall have good tents, blankets, all you can eat and a good time. Come all who are able and willing to work." All the police and many more of that stripe went to build a new prison for us who were more unfortunate. Think of it, patriots of this glorious Republic! that there were any among us who would lower themselves so much as to aid in the construction of a doom for those whose patriotism was so great and grand that they would put up with all the tortures that could be heaped upon them, even unto death, rather than lend a helping hand to their enemy. Thank God there were but few among us of that kind. The police were so much favored by the Rebs that they had big wall tents, bunks and blankets when in prison and, through their position, had on hand more provisions than they could possibly take with them. They even went so far as to make beer out of a portion of their surplus meal. The Rebs furnished them with tight barrels, one for each tent. They filled them about three-fourths with water, the balance with meal, which would ferment and soon sour in the heat of the sun. If it was not an intoxicant, it was grand to check the scurvy, but they only had access to it. They drank it freely and it was quite fattening. I slept on the ground right behind one of those tents. While packing up they called me in and told me to bring a sack and they would give me some meal and beans. I had nothing whatever, so they cut in two a sack they had no use for, and, to my surprise, they even had thread and needles, and made two small sacks. They put nearly a peck of corn meal in one and about the same of beans in the other. I lived pretty high for a day or two, but thought it would be a good idea to sell some and gradually get into business. There were new prisoners coming in occasionally who had a little money, so I sold enough to get fifty cents in cash and still had a little of each left. I laid down that

night with pleasant dreams of the future. I imagined I had bought of the guards at night and doubled my money. I had repeated this so many times in my dreams and found such ready sale for my goods that I was ahead a number of dollars. I could now take an extra ration out of my stock and still gain in wealth. I could see my way clear in the near future to three meals a day. When I awoke it was but a dream. I had the same half dollar but no more.

For some trivial misdemeanor of one of the prisoners our rations were cut off. We got no rations that day or the next, and I believe, the next. I had to break into my small fund to sustain life and before we drew rations again I was bankrupt. I never had a cent thereafter, while a prisoner, to bridge over a little time while rations were cut off. One day it was reported that Jeff Davis would be in Savannah the next morning. About 10 a. m. of the following day, we heard the boom of cannon, fired in his honor. We were satisfied that he would view the prison from one of the sentinel boxes. About 2 p.m. I was standing close to the dead line and directly opposite the first sentinel box to the right of the gate. We heard lots of cheering and Rebel yells outside, which indicated that he was coming. In a few minutes he and two others, probably a part of his cabinet, appeared in the box in front of me. I recognized him instantly from pictures I had seen of him. That small chin whisker and one eye were there, just as represented in his picture. We gazed at him as long as he stayed, probably fifteen minutes, merely out of curiosity. We longed for the power to reverse the situation.

Some prisoners were being brought to Savannah on a night train. While passing through the marshes some of them jumped off. They succeeded in reaching some negro cabins, got food and induced the darkies to exchange their butternut homespun for their blue suits for the purpose of facilitating their escape, for in butternut they would not be so easily recognized. They were in the woods for some days but were finally brought to bay by the blood hounds. Quite a number of others who escaped in that way for the time being, were brought in from time to time, until comrades with such suits were quite numerous. The Rebs finally stuck up notices inside to the effect that after a certain date, all found with a complete suit of that color would have their clothes taken from them. A number of us so pitied them that we exchanged a part of our blue for a part of their butternut clothes. The one I exchanged with got my blue pants, which were much stronger than the pair I got in exchange. I simply exchanged as a favor to prevent him from being stripped, not knowing him or expecting any favor on that account in the future, which I will relate in describing the journey to our lines.

As the stockade at Millen was about completed, we were again called out to go home(?). Alas, it was too true! In hundreds of cases they did go home! Not to the dear ones they longed so much to see but to their everlasting home, freed from the starving, torturing prison pens, and trials that

were worse than death! There was nothing worthy of note in our trip to Millen, except in passing through Savannah again, we saw the same sympathetic faces of those noble women and the same kind look from many men. We learned that that city was full of good Union people, and if one escaped, he could hardly miss finding protection by knocking at any door. I met some since the war who escaped from our train on another trip, when we laid over all night near the limits of that city. They said they had no trouble in finding protection and were secreted until Sherman and his army reached there on his march to the sea.

## CHAPTER V.

## MILLEN—WE BUILD A COMFORTABLE SHELTER.

Millen prison resembled Andersonville very much. The same kind of a stockade, dead line and grounds divided by a similar branch; about the same amount of land enclosed, but clean new ground and an abundance of wood. When they started to build it was heavily timbered with Georgia pine. All the timber used to build the stockade was taken off the enclosed grounds and they had hauled out much more, their intention being to get all out and issue us wood in small rations, but they were rushed for time and could not do it. They took no more out after our arrival. There were quite a number of large pine trees still standing and many logs of different sizes there. We got no rations the day we left Savannah and none until the next afternoon, which was nothing more than we expected, for they were always economical on such occasions. We had lots of room for there were never more than 10,000 there at one time. We had been in there but two days when a comrade came along wanting to sell a pan made of one of those pieces of sheet-iron taken from the ruins of the depot at Macon. There were eight of us in a little space and not one had anything to cook in and not a cent to buy with. We concluded to form a mess and buy the pan if possible. We told him our circumstances and asked him how many rations he would take for it. We bought the pan for thirteen rations, one to be paid every alternate day. It was not much, but amounted to considerable to part with out of our small supply, but it was even better to sacrifice some than to eat any more raw beans and meal. We were a nice little company of eight, always congenial and ready to help one another in sickness and distress. We were all emaciated and weak, but in union there's strength, and we at once applied our combined strength in rolling logs together that were close by and building a cabin that would shelter us from sun and rain. There was one log in position about two and one-half feet thick, that we left for the lowest part. Three others close by we rolled with hand spikes into position for the sides and the other end. One of the side logs was about two feet short, which left at a corner of the highest



part space to crawl in and out. We took some lighter logs, from eight to twelve inches in diameter, to build up the high end and the sloping sides. The high end was raised to about five feet. We gathered some straight limbs and, commencing at the lowest part, laid them across about ten inches apart until we had completed the roof thus far. The pine boughs on those southern trees are from fifteen to eighteen inches long. There were lots of fresh green ones, the longest of which we gathered for our purpose. We placed a layer of them close together, reaching from the second to the first cross limb and extending a few inches beyond the lower part of the roof, clear across from side to side. The next layer from the third to the second cross limb, which overlapped the first nearly half way, and so on until we had the roof covered similar to shingling. It took quite a hard and continuous rain for some time for even a drop of water to get through. We calked the sides and ends with boughs and gathered enough old dry boughs to fill the shanty half full for a bed. It took us about two days to complete it, for we were too weak to work continuously, but we were well paid for our labor for it was our first shelter and bed since we were prisoners. What comfort we took in lying there through the heat of the day and the protection it gave us from storms. My bare head had suffered so much with the blazing sun that I appreciated any place where I could crawl in and protect it. The shanty was about eight by ten feet, plenty of room for all, although not high enough at the highest point to stand up. If we had only had something to read to pass the lonely, long hours away how much more pleasant it would have been, but that we did not have. Each day seemed so long that it appeared an age since we entered Andersonville. When our second ration was received our man was on hand to get the first installment on the pan. As wood was plentiful, we could thoroughly cook our beans, always put the eight rations in together alternate days, otherwise seven, and when thoroughly cooked stir in the meal, boil until thick and set off to cool. When sufficiently cooled it was quite stiff. The pan would hold but little, if any, more than four quarts, but our entire eight rations for twenty-four hours would not fill it by an inch. As one or two of our party had knives and all were welcome to use them, I got a nice piece of wood and made myself a spoon about the size of a table spoon, with a handle about the same length. As I had curved the handle about like the handles of metal spoons, it soon broke, but was long enough for service and lasted me as long as I was a prisoner, a number of months. When our pan with rations was sufficiently cooled, one would draw a line through the center and three cross lines, making eight squares. We would sit on the ground in a circle around it and each dig out his little square. We would dig down as square as possible, each wanted his own and nothing more. Often a bean was found to be directly under a line, then a pleasant but earnest discussion arose as to who it belonged to. If the two interested could not agree, it was left to the others and whatever way they decided, was satisfactory. It may seem like a very small thing for a dis-



cussion to one who was not there, but bear in mind a ration was composed of very few of those small things and meant very much to us. We took turns in cooking and it was the duty of the cook to let none of the bean bugs escape when the water got warm enough to drive them from the bean shells. This caused such an impression on my mind that in after years I could, in my imagination, see bugs in my bread and other food and would innocently and sometimes thoughtlessly pick out little pieces and lay them by the side of my plate.

About five years after the close of the war I was boarding with a private family in Galesburg, Ill. One day after I had finished my dinner, I had occasion to return to the dining room for something and there stood the lady of the house examining the crumbs by the side of my plate that she had seen me place there. I was so embarrassed and humiliated that I hardly knew what to do. I did not realize when I picked them out of the food and placed them there that I was doing so, but when I saw her looking at them I knew I had for it was a fixed habit of mine. I said, "Please don't examine them, there's nothing there but clean food." I explained all to her satisfaction, told her the cause and that I could not help it. She did not know before that I had been in the army. She said, "Hereafter I shall pay no attention to anything of that kind done by you. You are welcome to pick the victuals as much as you please," and asked me to tell her all about my prison experiences when I had time. I tried hard to break myself of that habit formed from sad experiences more than thirty-six years ago, still I sometimes catch myself doing the same thing.

The first cloudy day after we had become comfortably quartered, I took a stroll along the little rippling branch in search of fish. I was very much surprised to see a hole that was washed by floods, fully thirty feet long, twenty feet wide and ten feet deep literally full of pickerel from a foot to fifteen inches in length. The water was as clear as crystal. I could see even the smallest pebble on the bottom. There were certainly more than two hundred of those nice fish. The pond was located about in the center of the grounds. How they got there is a question. They must have followed up the branch from some river during a flood. The stream was hardly large enough then for them to escape and I don't believe they cared to, they seemed to be so contented. How I longed for some of them, but there was no way to gratify my wish. No hooks, no lines, no bait. There were a few large pines overshadowing the pond and often I spent hours with others watching those fish. The Rebels did not camp above us on that stream. The water came from a pure spring and was delicious.

One day as I was going to the branch for water and when passing a half-rotten stump I almost stepped with my bare foot on a large blacksnake. I sprang to one side and yelled, "snake!" Two comrades close behind me picked up some sticks and killed it almost instantly. They took it with them, fastened it to a tree, skinned and cleaned it. It was amusing to notice the satisfactory smile on their faces. That meant a great feast for

them. It was about eight feet long. Another drowned out a gopher and he had a small feast.

One of our mess was taken sick and we did the best we could for him under the disadvantages of having no medicine. We tried to encourage him but of no avail; he had to die. We were accustomed to see hundreds die but none affected us like that. He was a noble young man but too frail for such a life. Highly educated and a graduate of Yale college, it was a pleasure to converse with him, but he had to go, and be buried like a dog. Stripped of all his clothes, hauled out with others in a wagon like so many dead hogs, placed on his back in a ditch and covered up. We had become so attached to each other that it was almost like losing a brother. We felt his loss in more ways than one. There was one less ration came to our mess and we had the pan not half paid for. Then we had to give every other day one ration out of seven. One day there was a strong and healthy young man turned in, wearing a good suit of clothes, the picture of health. He walked to the further side of the grounds before he was recognized. If he could have in some way colored his hair, all might have been well with him. His hair was fiery red, which gave him away. At one time in Andersonville a company was formed with the pretended purpose of digging a well and had got permission from Worz to do so. This was a little before Providence spring broke out. That red headed person was one of them. Those who had tents erected a large one over the spot where they commenced. They dug straight down about fifteen feet and enough to go under the stockade and then drifted. It was a long distance to the stockade and took a long time to accomplish the work, for the work had to be done under great disadvantages. The legs of the pants taken from dead men were used as sacks to drag the dirt from the end of the drift to the shaft where they were hoisted out. It would not do to have too much dirt on the surface at one time, for it might create suspicion if any of the Rebs should come around. The hole was as near the dead line as the tent would permit of. At night the dirt that was taken out during the day was hauled in these so-called sacks to the quicksand bed and dumped where it soon disappeared. At last the job was completed and they were waiting for a dark night to make their escape. The drift was gradually raised, when beyond the stockade, to within two feet of the surface, which could be broken through in a few minutes when necessary. If this red-head had not been one of their number, hundreds might have escaped and probably many for good, for should they have scattered they could not have followed all. But this person, to make his chance doubly sure, went to the gate and told the guard that he had some very important news and would like to talk with Captain Worz. The guard took him to Worz's headquarters. In consideration of the important news, Worz kept him out, gave him all he could eat, tent and blankets and a new suit of clothes. Within one hour two men were sent in with tools and between the stockade and dead line sank right down on the drift. As long as he was kept at Andersonville, he was all

right, but when sent from there to Millen, he fell into other hands that knew naught of the compact between him and Worz, and he was turned inside. The comrade who recognized him gave the alarm and hundreds rushed in to surround and overpower and end his career, but he had been so well provided for that the poor weak fellows could do nothing with him. He ran like a deer for the gate and as we rushed in to stop his progress, he knocked all down who crossed his path, and when the Rebs saw him coming they swung the gates wide open to let him out. I heard that since the war, he was killed by some of those he betrayed; how true it is I can not say. One thing is certain, had the boys got him down he would have been killed. I never saw him after.

Another of our mess was taken sick and died. Dysentery was the dread of our lives. Fully one-half of the lives lost in those prisons could be safely traced to that cause. I took every precaution possible to prevent it and succeeded. We most invariably ate our meat raw, unless we got a bone and then we boiled it with our beans. The bones I received in rations I burned to a crisp and ate them and I believe that is what saved me. The coarse food we had was inclined to physie and then run from one stage to another and very soon end in death. We had but a few more rations to pay for our pan but it came much harder on us to pay them. My dear comrades of the mess continued to die and at the end of six weeks from the time the mess was formed, the time we had to leave our comfortable cabin, never to get another, to go to another prison, I believe our mess was reduced to four. A few days before our departure, one night at twelve o'clock, the guards were calling the hour. They called it off in the familiar sing-song way, "Post No. 1, twelve o'clock and all's right!" When the call had reached Post No. 24, that guard varied it somewhat, in this way, "Post No. 24, twelve o'clock and the Confederacy's gone to hell!" Just before this call was made, there was no semblance of life inside; it was as silent as the tomb. To all appearances every soul was sound asleep, but it was very seldom that we slept sound. There were too many contending elements for that. Thoughts of how much longer we would have to live thus, and could we possibly stand it to the end and see our homes again; always faint and dizzy from hunger, covered with lice, which constantly sucked our life's blood, from which there was no escape, all these prevented sound sleep. It appeared that every one heard that call, for, as if by command, every throat was expanded to the utmost and in unison, three cheers were given that seemed to rend the heavens and blend with the stars above. It was glorious news, but premature. It was without doubt the wish of that guard and thousands of others, who were tired of fighting for a hopeless cause. We must have gone to Millen in the latter part of October for we were there on National election day in November, the day that Abraham Lincoln was elected the second time to the presidency of the United States. The Rebs desired to know how the vote stood inside for Lincoln and Gen. McClellan, the Democratic candidate. They

furnished us ballots and near the big gate a box to deposit them in. We understood that Lincoln got nearly all the votes.

Sherman was on his march to the sea. His immense army was getting nearer and nearer. His cavalry was in advance and it was not safe to hold us in Millen longer for we were right in the path that Sherman was to pursue. How we hoped that our cavalry would surprise them and give us our liberty, but it was too far away. We were ordered once more to come out and go home. We were undeceived. Their deception would not work. Again we were placed on flat cars and taken south to Savannah, thence southwest on the Florida Coast railroad. It was not necessary to feed us the day we left Millen for it was not customary and it might have had an evil effect on us. Our destination was a very small town by the name of Blackshire, twelve miles from the Florida line. The track was built through alligator swamps. All we could see was ponds of water covered with a very thick green scum; the water was the same color and islands from one to ten acres in size covered with timber, mostly cypress, whose moss reached from the drooping limbs to the water's surface. The moss was from ten to thirty feet long. The islands were inhabited by all kinds of tree squirrels and it was amusing to watch their capers as we passed slowly by. There were the red, white, black and the gray, all with long bushy tails. The limbs of the trees in places would reach almost from island to island, which gave the squirrels almost unlimited range. There were lots of dead, moss covered logs in those stagnant waters, resting places for turtles and alligators to sun themselves. We saw two alligators (in one pond) that must have been from fifteen to sixteen feet long, on logs. The guards fired at them, but whether they hit them or not, it seemed to have no effect on them more than they lazily crawled off into the slimy water and sank out of sight just as turtles would. Mosquitoes were at home here—millions of them. The engine that pulled our train was nearly worn out and moved very slowly and at last stopped dead still. The stations were a long distance apart there, and how many miles the engineer or fireman had to walk the track to the next station to telegraph for another engine I have forgotten. We had then been a night and day on the road without food or water. There were two guards to each car. One sat at the corner on one side, the other at the other end on the opposite side so that both sides of the car could be watched. Usually old men from fifty-five to sixty, too old for any other service, were used as guards. I sat next to one with my feet hanging over the side, with whom I got very well acquainted. He said his home was in Atlanta. He claimed to be as good a Union man as myself, which was as much as to say there are no better. His family and all he had on earth was there; he could not get away and therefore had to obey their commands. He and I talked nearly all the time about the prospects of the war and other matters, such as pertaining to his life, the people north and south, their different modes of living, etc.

Night at last came and we tried to sleep, but very little we got on ac-



count of the mosquitoes. What terrible long nights those were. The next afternoon my companion guard began to feel the pangs of hunger. He was not used to living on wind as we were, which went hard with him. When we started he had one day's rations, which were supposed to do him until we should reach Blackshire. We had none. He had finished his and began to wonder where or when he would get more. He asked, "How long have you been without food?" I replied, "since the day before we started." He was surprised at how I could stand it. I told him I was used to it. "Well," he said, "if you have a pan I have some rice in my haversack which we will cook." I stepped forward on the car two or three steps to where my mess mates were and got it and was pleased with the prospect of filling up on rice. There were lots of chips between the track and the water, cut off the ties when placing them. We gathered a few, pushed back the thick green scum and filled the pan half full of green stinking water. When it approached the boiling point, he went for his haversack. Oh, what a pitiful sight it was to see those haggard faces looking down from the cars to our steaming pan, all longing for a bite. When the haversack was opened what a surprise met his gaze. A long bar of soap he had in there had become jammed in with the rice. It was all mixed up. I assisted in picking it out and put it in the pan. In a few moments there was as fine suds boiling over the pan as was ever seen at a Monday's washing. We poured the water off and got some more. When that got hot there was as much lather as ever. We continued to parboil until the rice was boiled to pieces and still just as much, if not more lather than at first. We could do nothing but try it. I took one spoonful, managed to swallow it but it gagged me so I could not touch any more. The guard did the same but one spoonful was enough to satisfy him. Others seemed to be anxious to try it and all were invited to do so. Each took a spoonful which sufficed, but as there were so many to test it all was eaten. We were on the track there three days before an engine came to pull us out. That made five days without food, except the spoonful of soap and rice.

About 9 p. m. we arrived at Blackshire. We laid down on the grass and slept right in the town for there were but three or four houses besides the depot. In the morning early we were ordered to fall in line to receive rations. One would naturally think they would be inclined to give us some extra on account of being so long without food, but they started at the head of our line and gave but two crackers to each and nothing but the two crackers. I stood near the head of the line and when I received my quota I stepped behind as some others did, sneaked down the line and fell in again. I trembled slightly for fear they had noticed me, because for a trifle like that they would severely punish me. I got two more crackers which so encouraged me that I tried it again and got in all six. Some may have done better but a very great majority got but two.

After the distribution of rations we were marched across the railroad track and about two hundred yards beyond onto a piece of land shaped like



a gourd, about five acres in extent and nearly surrounded with water. All they had to guard was the entrance, a very narrow neck, for we could not escape from any other point unless we wished to contribute ourselves as food for alligators. We remained there two weeks. As there were no cattle in that swampy country we had no meat, neither had we beans or meal, nothing but two crackers each per day and for water to quench our thirst only that green malarial stuff as warm nearly as new milk. The Rebs seemed to be afraid to keep us in that part of Georgia for they knew that Sherman would soon be in Savannah and they would be cut off from all communication with their capitol, Richmond, Va. We were taken back over the same road to Savannah again for the purpose of running north of that city and crossing into South Carolina, but they learned that Sherman's Cavalry had reached and destroyed the railroad bridge across the Savannah river, and that therefore was out of the question. We remained on the cars, or were supposed to, all night at the city limits, guarded and fires built on both sides of the train so we could not slip down the embankment and get away.

The last rations we received was the day before we left Blackshire and to remain on the cars all night without food and probably one or two more days, prompted us to get something to satisfy our craving appetites if possible. All the guards were lying down on the cars and seemed to be asleep. About midnight I got off and crept the whole length of the train to the rear under the shadow of the cars and down the track a number of rods beyond, then went down the embankment and under the shade of trees got away nearly a quarter of a mile, when I got upon the track and continued my walk until I came to a road at right angle to the railroad leading into the country. The crossing was about a mile from the train. When I had followed the road about a mile from the track, I noticed a pile of something on some plowed land in the rear of a house and went to investigate. It was a beautiful moonlight night and I could see a long distance. I separated the straw that covered the pile, which proved to be sweet potatoes. I wiped the dirt off of one and just started to eat it when I saw a number of persons coming toward me who proved to be comrades who had taken the same notion. I was the first to leave the train and probably others saw me and followed later. In a few minutes there were enough there to eat the entire pile. We saw at least two hundred pass us and go beyond. So many had left the train that we were missed and they got a drove of blood hounds out beyond us by taking another road, cut across onto ours and drove us all back. I took with me five or six long potatoes and appeased my appetite very well before morning by eating some of them raw. I realized, when too late, that I had made a mistake in not creeping toward the head of the train and going to the city, for I believe I would have found protection until Sherman arrived and ended my career as a prisoner.

The next morning on account of being baffled in their attempt to get into South Carolina, our train started back over the same track and ran

to the end of the road at Thomasville, Ga. I believe it took us two days to get there. It is, however, immaterial, for we had been long enough without food and got nothing until the next day after our arrival.

Thomasville was a pretty town located on high ground. The surrounding country was beautiful, a nice view south, east and west, but north, covered with fine timber. We were taken beyond the town north close to the timber on a fine grassy knoll, heavily guarded and fires built around our camp every night for there was not even a fence surrounding us. We got rations the next day, the same small allowance, no more than though we had received them regularly. It must have been about four days we were without, less the few raw sweet potatoes we had. It was evident that they never thought of taking us to Thomasville before they were cut off from South Carolina, or they certainly would have started at least to build a pen of some kind to keep us in. However, within twenty-four hours after our arrival we saw 1000 negroes coming down the road from a plantation a mile west with picks, spades and shovels. They commenced to dig a ditch around us about eight feet deep and ten feet wide. This looked like it was to be a permanent job and it was to be our abode until the close of the war. We always knew when the darkies left the plantation at morning and noon, for they would start up some old plantation song and sing it until they reached their places to work. Negroes usually have strong voices and 1000 singing at one time made the woods ring. One with a powerful voice would sing each verse alone and all would join in on the chorus. We could catch the words of a verse or two, but there seemed to be no sense or meaning to them. All I remember is, "O Jonsin's army, Jonsins' army am commin." It was a song that they had probably composed about what they had heard of Rebel General Johnston's marches. The one who sang the verses alone always had a finger in each ear while doing so. How they would roll their eyes, and the whites of them and their teeth would show in contrast to their black skins. I sat on the bank and watched them day after day, dig and throw dirt but not one word escaped their lips while at work, except when those carrying water came around. A certain number did nothing else, for it took lots of water to supply 1000. When the jug was being passed around near them they would yell, "Watah, watah, wata, wata, wata." The rising inflection was given to the three last letters of the first two words and the last three words were spoken very quickly but they did not stop work to utter those calls and continued until the jug was handed them for there was a slave driver on the bank with a long black-snake whip watching them all the time. It would have been a very pleasant camp if we had any kind of shade and no disease had got among us, but that changed the aspect. I think we had been there about ten or twelve days when the small pox broke out among us. Sleeping on the damp ground, without shelter, care or medicine, was not a desirable place to have that dreadful disease, if anywhere. It spread rapidly and in the next ten days or

so over 500 died. None had any fear of that or any other disease for there was but little choice between living or dying. If any, it was in favor of the latter, for we felt under the treatment we had to endure we all had to succumb before the war would end. We could get no news there, for no new prisoners could be brought to us.

From the time I was a little boy until sixteen or seventeen years of age, I was often vaccinated, some years as often as two or three times, but it would never take—always heal as quickly as any scratch. I was right among the sick and dying by day and by night and awoke one morning right against one who had passed away. It was very sad for me, for my remaining mess mates were taken down and died. I cared for them the best I could, but who would care for me if I should be taken down? On account of the many days we had been associated, the privations we endured together in paying for the pan, the many nights we slept together in the little cabin in Millen, the many jokes we cracked over our small rations while eating them, endeared us to one another so much that my loss seemed almost greater than I could bear. How lonely I was when I cooked my little ration, and how sad to sit down alone to eat it, which seemed almost lost in that pan. If that disease had not got among us, they might have lived to return home for they were standing the trials well. Only four more months, as it turned out, and they would have been free.

On the road to Thomasville, in the night, a few jumped off the cars. About a week after one was brought in and he was the worst looking sight I ever saw. The citizens got after him with blood hounds and pressed him so closely that he had to climb a tree. He was beyond the reach of the hounds but when the citizens came up they commanded him to come down. He said he would if they would call off the hounds and protect him, which they promised to do. As soon as he alighted one of them knocked him down with the butt of his gun, which blow knocked one eye out and then let the hounds bite and pull him round until they were satisfied. I do not believe it is the least exaggeration to state that there was not a spot on his body larger than the palm of a man's hand that was not marked by a dog's tooth. He swore vengeance on those citizens if he lived to the close of the war.

At the end of three weeks from the time we reached Thomasville the Rebs learned that Gen. Wilson with a command of cavalry was coming down the railroad track to release us. They quickly lined us up the next morning before daybreak, gave each two crackers and nothing else and started us on a march of sixty miles through the swamps for Albany, Ga., on another railroad. The ditch they were digging at Thomasville lacked about four rods of completion, which proved to be a waste of time and labor. We marched till after dark and laid down in the timber by the roadside to rest and sleep till morning. Before the least ray of light could be seen in the east we were lined up and each given two more crackers but nothing more. On our march that day we passed through a valley where there

were a few acres of white turnips. Rebel Gen. Wilder, who was with us, commanded his black servant to pull a few for him. I walked close behind Wilder's horse and the first peeling he dropped from a turnip I got, but got no more. There were too many anxious for them. We marched again till after dark and the next morning were called up again as early as usual to receive but two crackers and resume our journey. I remember that was the 22nd day of December from the fact we got back to Andersonville prison December 24th, the day before Christmas. A cold wave passed through that country at that time. The days were not so severe for we were on the march and our blood was in circulation, but at night it froze quite hard and being almost naked we nearly chilled to death. I am satisfied that many deaths at night were directly due to that cause. It was a hard task for us to start in the mornings for our feet were more than four times their natural size, shaped more like boxing gloves, with deep bleeding cracks all over them, caused from scurvy, cold nights and fully half the time wading in cold water. We could barely stand at first. Our feet were almost as sensitive as a boil and it was quite common to hear the poor boys cry out with pain. But march, we had to! After a copious flow of blood from the cracks the pain would lessen and after we had marched two or three miles we would get along as well as could be expected. We marched until eight o'clock that night, when we came to a sluggish stream about seventy-five yards wide. All streams so near the coast moved very lazily. We were ordered into the timber to our left to stay, as we supposed, all night. Dry leaves were plentiful and although very dark we could feel. I pulled a large lot of leaves together, laid down and covered myself with them. I thought I would have one good night's rest. The others I suppose were enjoying the comfort of beds of leaves as I was. Sweet sleep had overcome us, for God knew we very much needed it. We had enjoyed it perhaps two hours. The Rebels thought it was too good for us so they came through the timber shouting, "Get up and march." We did so and in a few steps came to the river. There was an island in the center. A hewed log spanned the distance from the shore to the island and another from the island to the other shore. The Rebel officers crossed on them, then a guard leading us. I was close to the first guard and had reached about the center of the first log when an officer from the other shore yelled, "Are those Yankee sons of b—s crossing on the logs?" The head guard replied that we were. "Make them ford the river!" The guard turned around and forced us to jump into the cold water by pushing us off with his bayonet. It was very dark but we found the bottom. It was an awful jar on our tender sore feet, but who cared for us or what we suffered? I remember the water reached just to my chin. Before I reached the other side I had to throw my head back to keep my nose out of it. I was a good swimmer but too weak to try that. How those managed who were shorter I do not know, but believe that many were drowned and floated away to where man never trod, for alligator food the coming



spring. We were marched not over two hundred yards from the bank of the river to a rocky bluff, all of three hundred feet high, which we had to climb and there was our camp that night. We were above all the surrounding timber, a keen cold wind was blowing and we shook all night long in our cold, wet rags. That was one of the worst nights ever experienced by any human being and added to that, nothing but six crackers in three days, besides a march in that time of probably forty-five miles. There was not even a spear of grass, nothing but rough rocks under our feet, and so dark we could not see to move around to keep our blood in circulation without stumbling over them. It was the longest night we ever experienced; it seemed like daylight would never come. We were the same as though clothed in ice, for the few rags we had were frozen stiff! I have heard men in the north make excuses for our treatment by saying they did not have the food to give us. In my travels from one prison to another I saw corn in abundance. When on raids I saw the same and to corroborate this, did not Sherman's immense army live on the narrow strip of country it passed through on its march to the sea. But if they were inclined to be good to us and treat us simply as prisoners of war, why did they, whenever the opportunity offered, commit such dastardly deeds as the one just related? What time did they gain or what was their object in routing us out of our dry beds of leaves, under the protection of heavy timber, where no chilly blasts of wind could touch us? What was their object in making us ford the stream when all could have crossed as soon on the logs, without getting wet? And to cap the climax, why did they march us onto a rocky bluff, the highest point around where the cold wind could pierce our gaunt frames and freeze stiff the few rags with which we were clothed? Were all these inhuman acts perpetrated because they could not do better by us? Was it not that they wished to kill us off as fast as possible and in a manner that could not be traced to direct or wilful murder? Who is to answer for the lives of scores of men who chilled to death that night? Rebel Gen. Winder and his under officers. How can any person who has a spark of patriotism insult those boys, who went through such trials, worse than death a hundred times, by offering apologies for such fiends? I do not pretend to say that all Confederates were heartless and inhuman; far from it, for not one in one thousand of those who had been in active service would mistreat a prisoner. We were handled by Rebs who were never to the front and it seemed as though the most inhuman were chosen for that purpose. When the least light was visible in the east we were marched down the bluff to the valley below and though many less to feed, our allowance was the same, two crackers apiece, only.

Now, dear reader, I have reached a point in our experiences which commands your closest attention to fully understand the length of time we went without food and the terrible tortures we were forced to endure. Weak and emaciated to commence with, it was a terrible task to march fifteen miles per day on such a small allowance of food and that, too, not very nu-



tritious. How often have mothers given a little child two crackers to lunch on between meals? That constituted our food for a whole day while marching sixteen or seventeen hours out of twenty-four. When we had received our crackers, which we devoured in a few moments, we marched but a few steps to a marsh, so vast in extent that we could not see to the other side. All around the border, about four rods wide, ice had formed during the night, and in many places beside where there were tufts of grass visible in this vast expanse of water. It was too weak to bear our weight and as we plunged through it, our tracks were marked with blood, for it would cut our feet and legs like broken glass. We marched in water from six inches to two feet deep for more than seven hours, frequently breaking ice and receiving fresh cuts, before we landed on the other side. From there on we had high, sandy land, quite warm, which gave us great comfort but was hard to walk in. Our course was through heavy pitch-pine timber. Many of the trees had been tapped in the season to make tar. It took us until eleven o'clock that night to complete our journey to Albany, and we were forthwith loaded into cattle cars. After that long day's march and all so tired, weak and faint that we were ready to drop, we were forced to stand up in the cars, crowded as close as sardines in a box and while closing the door a few more were raised up and forced in to be sure that there would be no space wasted. While a car was being filled Rebs were in it crowding and pushing us around like cattle to make us occupy as small a space as possible. When the door was closed and locked, we were actually so tightly packed that it was impossible for us to squat. Think of it, after marching more than eighteen hours on that day on but two crackers and then placed in a position where we were to remain on our feet for—we did not know how long, without food or water. One with the greatest command of language could not begin to describe our woeful condition and the terrible sufferings we endured while in those cars—Oh, so long, without one whimper! Why then should I attempt to describe it?

About midnight the train pulled out from Albany, to take us, we knew not where. We were so weary that our heads would drop on others' shoulders, but we could not sleep for nature had been called on to that extent that our feet, limbs and bodies pained us almost equal to the toothache, and sleep was out of the question. We rode in that position the rest of the night, all the next day and until some time after dark, without food or water. The train at last stopped at a station where we were commanded to get off. It was very dark and raining quite hard and was just above the freezing point. When in the cars, each supported the other, but when we started to move out, the support was gone and many fell like dead. In very many cases it was real, many having died on their feet, but it was not known until we commenced to move aside and their support was gone. Those noble sons, enduring deprivations and tortures unto death for their country's sake and in such positions! Some say, they would not have withstood such trials if they could have in any way avoided them. Do not be-

lieve it. There was a standing offer at all times to feed and clothe all who would swear allegiance to the Confederacy, but not one in our lot would consider it for a moment. We enlisted for a purpose and were fighting a terrible battle for life in the interest of that purpose. When we got out of the cars, saw the depot and surroundings, the very limited distance the darkness would permit, all looked familiar. Sherman was in Savannah and by a circuitous route they had again landed us in Andersonville. During our absence some enterprising citizen had concluded that the land inside the stockade was rich and would produce a big crop of hog beans and therefore had plowed the smaller side divided by the stream, for that purpose. After all we had been through, sufficient to kill hundreds, it was not enough to satisfy the inhumanity of the Rebel officials. Instead of granting us the liberty of going anywhere in the enclosure, the larger side was slippery but not deep mud, they placed us on the side that was plowed, and had guards along the branch to prevent us from crossing over onto solid footing. It was raining quite hard and was so dark that we could not see. We stood around in that cold mud, almost to our knees, all night long, and there was no place even where we could sit down and rest our weary frames. A march of eighteen hours the day before, with but two crackers to eat very early in the morning, on our feet all that night and the day following till after dark, packed in cars so tight that it was difficult to breathe, without food and water, then to be turned into such a hole in a cold rain still without food and drink, for we could not see to get to the creek, besides, if we could the guards might mistake our intentions, to spend another night on our feet in deep mud next to the freezing point, soaked to the skin with that very cold rain and water dripping from our garments, would seem to be beyond the endurance of any human being, still the morning found most hovering between life and death but many lying with hair, that many a fond mother would like to brush back from those noble brows, matted with mud and silent in death.

## CHAPTER VI.

## IN ANDERSONVILLE AGAIN—A SORRY CHRISTMAS.

That morning was Christmas and it was still raining. We could not help thinking of the contrast between our condition and that of our people in northern homes. Even though we could, we would not have informed them of our condition that day as it would have marred their happiness. Well, being Christmas, the Rebs promised us a great feast, something out of the ordinary. The first thing on the program was roll call, then the Rebs had the audacity to bring in shovels and command us to shovel paths, so they could call the roll without wading through the mud. Very few could do much more than lift a shovel. The youngest, or those who came to us at Savannah prison, were not so much reduced and had a little strength left. They did the best they could, and after roll call we were arranged in divisions, companies and messes. The streets between the hundreds had to be shovelled each morning for two or three mornings after, for it rained all that time day and night.

We drew rations between 3 and 4 p. m. when there before, and we did not look for the "grand feast" before that time. Three o'clock came, then four, and no rations. The hours passed and darkness came, still no rations. We concluded that Christmas was to be a fast day. After we had given up all hopes, about 9 p. m., the big gate swung open, we saw a light from a lantern and a team drove in with a wagon load of barrels filled with cooked rice, cold as a stone and soaked with rain water. We got not to exceed a half pint apiece and that was all. I drew mine in my hand and soon finished it. There was not a particle of seasoning in it, not even salt. That was the something extra—"our great Christmas feast!!"

It rained and continued to rain, and we continued to stand but we gathered in bunches, leaned toward each other and with arms around each others necks, one supported the other while we slept. There was a perpendicular bank near the creek about ten feet high that had caved away during our absence. Immediately after dark a comrade and myself secured a shovel from a few that had been left in to shovel paths, and went to the foot of the bank to dig a hole in it so that we could get out of the rain. By very

hard work, we succeeded in getting a hole in far enough so that by sitting down side by side in a very cramped position, the rain could not touch us. We had not the strength to throw the dirt far enough away, so in a few minutes, the sheet of water that was coming down from the top of the bank, struck our little pile of dirt and ran into the hole and drove us out. Four others went about twenty feet from us and started their hole higher up and succeeded in getting a good shelter, and there they remained until they were dug out the next morning, for during the night the bank cracked a few feet back and turned over. The poor fellows were smothered and crushed, a pitiful sight to see, faces black and blue and blood oozing from mouth, nose and ears. Our fate would have been the same had our place not filled with water. It continued to rain all that day and until late in the night when it cleared up, cold and a strong wind blowing.

We drew rations the same as when there before, but no horse and mule, for there were no armies near to kill them for us. To give an idea of the size of a ration of steak—I drew one day a shank bone without a particle of meat on it. Such bones were stripped clean, for they were considered choice. As soon as I got it different ones offered me three rations of steak for it. It was the first time I had drawn one and I concluded to try its virtue. I boiled it with my beans and it improved their flavor very much. I had no other place to put it so carried it in my pocket. The next day I boiled it with my beans again but pulled a little of the marrow out of the ends. The next day I did the same and do not know how much longer it would have lasted for there was still considerable marrow in it, had not some one removed it from my pocket during the night when I was asleep.

When the ground dried off, six of us dug a hole about six feet long, four feet deep and just wide enough for us to spoon up and fill it snugly. The object was to get below the surface where the cold wind could not strike us. It answered very well, for we kept much warmer, although about midnight the side on the ground became damp and numb and the other side cold. The two against the walls suffered the most, but we took turns in sleeping on the outside. About that hour we would raise up together and spoon the other way. This was all right during dry weather but when it stormed we had to take to the surface, which was quite frequent, and wait until the hole was dry again.

I got an old blouse, the only piece of clothing I ever got from a dead man, divided it and used it to wrap up my feet at night. After one of those cold storms (it would some times snow a little) it turned so cold that our little branch froze over and a number of us crossed it on the ice bare-footed. I do not remember how long it took us to tramp down our part of the enclosure as hard as that part that was not plowed, probably three weeks, but as soon as it was hard the guards were removed and we were at liberty to go anywhere within. We soon after induced Worz to furnish a trough to convey the spring water through to our side of the dead line. After that we had pure water.

New prisoners were brought in occasionally but in limited numbers. Through them we learned that Gen. Sherman was on his way through South and North Carolina to reach Virginia and assist Gen. Grant in the capture of Richmond, the Rebel capitol. They believed the war would soon be over. Such news gave us courage, but many long days passed and many more died before that glad day came. The Rebs would once in awhile send in a few Macon papers, when filled with "glorious Confederate news", of great victories won by them, (all manufactured) to discourage us all they could, and the next morning the recruiting officer would come in and ask, "Who wants to swear allegiance to the Confederacy? All who wish to, follow me. We will give you all you can eat, a good suit of clothes each, tent, blankets and your freedom". It would have been very tempting under any other circumstances to starving, suffering men, but we had sworn allegiance to the best government ever instituted by man. We represented a cause that made every man a freeman, and live or die, we would stand by our colors to the end! Not alone because our oaths bound us, but the glorious stars and stripes was our emblem and no temptation was strong enough to cause us to desert it! Instead of tempting us it made us wrathly. There's an old adage, "Whip a dog and it will kiss the hand that smote him." We were a thousand times worse than whipped, for death was staring us in the face day by day, but that was preferable to lending assistance to a cause that meant perpetual slavery to a portion of the human race, simply on account of color, which also meant that father or mother, son or daughter could, at the will of the master, be torn from the arms of the family and for gold be transported beyond their sight forever! However, I regret to say, there were a very few who weakened and went out. I do not believe any of them had lost their love for the old flag, but as they expressed it, they did so to save their lives. They did not believe they could live through it to the end in there. They would render no assistance to the Rebel cause, but were taking that chance simply to save their lives. I believe they meant it. We argued and plead with them, told them they could not help assisting the Rebel cause as much as though they were in sympathy with it, for the Rebs would not trust them at the front but place them in the rear to do guard duty and thus relieve Rebel soldiers they could send to the front and rely on, so indirectly they would fight for the Rebel cause. But the thought of life, liberty and in the end—home, overbalanced everything else and out they went to forever be disgraced. Later on I will relate what a predicament these same persons got into.

As wood was so scarce it was economy to cook two or more rations with the same amount as it took to cook one. Besides, with two rations twice as much wood could be used at a time and that much more thoroughly cook our beans. I accepted a comrade from Indiana as my mess mate. He was a nice young man but caught the fever of saving his life by going out. I argued with him, plead with him and at last prevented him from swearing allegiance to the Confederacy by physical force. Neither of us



had much of that but I got him down and held him until the recruiting officer had gone outside. That was the last chance he had to desert our flag for in three or four days we were told to pack up and go home. He was very wrathful and promised to punish me for that some day. You will learn later on how severely he carried out his promise. That was not the first time he intended to go out. For weeks I held him with arguments but at last persuasion ceased to affect him.

I have been asked, did you ever receive mail from the north while in prison? Mail came there for some, but very few ever got it. At such times a Rebel officer would step inside and cry out, "Mail from the north!" We would gather as near him as possible to listen to the names called off. When one would answer, he would ask, "Have you twenty-five cents?" Very few could rake up the price and therefore never had the pleasure of reading letters from home.

About 200 Indians, who enlisted in Michigan and Wisconsin, were taken prisoners at about the same time that I was, but only two lived to get out. The colored soldiers died there much faster in proportion to their number than the whites. It is easy to understand why the Indians died so rapidly, for their roving dispositions were accountable for it, but why the colored ranks were so depleted can be accounted for in but one way—the lack of education. The control of the mind had as much to do with our endurance there as our physical condition. Worrying and fretting killed hundreds. It was those who were cheerful under all trials that lived to see their homes again. We had a little amusement at times. We had to have it or we would have died! It kept our minds from home and its comforts. When rations were received and our beans placed over fires to cook, we would strip our rags off, turn them inside out, sit down close to the fire to keep as warm as possible, and each of six or eight would put up a forfeit of a bean on who would get the most graybacks at a picking. For that reason, I remember very distinctly the number one usually caught. As we picked them we would throw them into the fire to hear them pop, as well as to get rid of them. The fire seemed to swell them and they would snap about half as loud as popcorn. If the weather was dry and the sun warm, each would get about 250 at a picking. If damp and cold, from 350 to 400. The cause of the difference was, that on a bright warm day a part of them would leave us and forage around in the sand. When damp and cold they would lunch on us. The difference in our pickings would not vary much, but who ever got the most would get the beans. Why did we not exterminate them? It was impossible! We had nothing to boil our clothes in and if we had we did not have the wood to do so; besides we had no soap and never saw any in the enclosure. None had combs and therefore we never combed our heads from the time we commenced our prison service until a week or more after we entered our lines. One comrade from Maine, as jolly a fellow as ever lived, when stripping for a grayback hunt, always had some comment to make that would set us all to laughing. One day, when stripped, he said,

"There's a bean in that pan of soup some where and I am going to dive to the bottom to find it". We called anything in a hot liquid form, soup. My mess mate and I would usually fill the pan nearly full of water to boil our few beans, and when we had used all the wood we could afford, stir in the corn meal and make very thin gruel. The others as well as ourselves did so to fill up as much as possible and warm us. Another amusement we had which was very exciting was the races. One of the boys, through some means or other, got possession of an inch board about fifteen inches long and a foot wide. When our meals were done and we were waiting for them to cool sufficiently to eat, we would place the board over the hottest bed of coals and get it so hot that we could barely touch it with our hands. Three or four of us would get down to the end of the board, bet a bean apiece out of our next rations on having the fastest grayback. Each would reach in and get one and we would hold them with their heads pointing to the other end of the board. We would hold our hands close to the board while some one not in it would call, one, two, three, go! All would drop our birds and away they would go over the hot board. It was surprising how fast, under the circumstances, they would run. The one who had the winner would put it back next to his body, but the rest had to die. Nearly every day we had a race of that kind. The excitement made us more cheerful. Do not call it cruel for such an act, for any person tormented as we were by them, could not have any mercy on them. When running, they would raise their bodies as high in the air as their legs would permit and they looked to be twice as tall as usual. But you might argue, you picked your clothes just before while your meal was being cooked? What did that signify? There was not a day, but immediately after picking, if we had gone over our clothes again, but that each could have found from twenty-five to fifty more. We never lacked for them, for the sand was alive with them when it was dry and warm. A short, blocky Englishman, with a very broad accent, a comrade who had been paid off just before he was captured, came in one day with some more prisoners. He smuggled in all he had, which was reputed to be \$300. We understood that he cut a hole in a piece of ham that he carried by a string, put the green backs in it, closed the hole and then rolled it in something repulsive. His lower limbs were very much bowed and he went by the name of Jimmy Bowlegs. As he had the means he could purchase anything he wished from the guards at night. He fed and sheltered three or four strong men to assist and protect him from the thugs at night. He dug a place in the bank about ten feet long and eight feet wide and six feet deep, boarded it up, roofed it, built the end with lumber and had a door and the means of fastening it on the inside. All of that material he bought of the guards at night. He dealt in corn meal, beans, rice, sweet potatoes, tobacco and hot pones of bread. After doing business four or five weeks, he built a bake oven out of clay, bought wood of the guards to heat it, and when sufficiently hot for the purpose, would pull out all the fire and ashes, shove in about fifty little oval

pans half filled with corn meal dough, close up the chimney and fire place with mud, and bake the little pones with the heat therein. The oval pans were made by melting the solder around the outer edge of canteens, which he bought of the guards. His counter was a board about ten feet long supported by four legs. Only the new prisoners had money and very few of them, but as long as it lasted they patronized Jimmy B., for at first they could not get along on the very scanty supply of rations. It seems as though I can almost see and hear him still, as he stood behind his simple counter calling out, "Who's the next looky mon for a pone of bread? Only ten cents!" He did a thriving business and it was thought by some that he doubled his original capital several times. As soon as it was dark his goods and counter were taken inside and he and his helpers would fasten the door and retire. About once a week, when the spirit moved him, caused by internal spirits bought of the guards, he would offer anyone three of those little pones who would eat them at his counter, without stopping and without water. The one attempting it had to put up a forfeit of some kind. As but few could do that, it was not often tried. I remember at one time a tall, lanky, raw-boned Kentuckian wanted to try it. He put up as a forfeit an old infantry over-coat. He soon devoured three pones and wanted to try three more. One poor fellow ate two and part of the third and died before the next morning.

Worz adopted the same plan a few days after our return, in issuing rations, as was followed at Savannah prison, through policemen he chose from among us. Nearly all were the same persons who filled like positions at Savannah. They were large, fleshy and the worst element in there. They had no more conscience or feeling for their companions than a brute. All the rations were issued directly to them and what they did not want, we got. They were furnished with clubs, similar to those used by policemen in cities. Their authority was supreme. We had to be very careful how we addressed them. If one should suggest that they were taking out of the whole supply, more than they could use, when all knew they were, a stroke of a club would settle the argument. I often watched them divide the rations for the different divisions and felt ashamed for them at the amount they would take for themselves before a division was made. Each would take as much meat as two could eat and of the choicest cuts. Hardly a day passed that they did not have from two to four bucked and gagged. It was heart-rending to witness the sufferings of those poor comrades, more dead than alive. We could hardly keep from protesting but knew that should we do so, we would be punished in the same way and probably knocked down with a club first. For the benefit of those who do not know what is meant by bucking and gagging, just for amusement and illustration, tie a boys hands, slip his arms over and below his knees and push a stick over the former and under the latter and observe what a cramped and helpless position he is in, and if left that way for a few minutes, how painful. That is bucking. Take a stick about four inches long, tie a stout string to each

end, place the stick in his mouth and tie the strings together back of his head as tight as they can be drawn. Do not do so with the poor boy, but that is the way it was done in Andersonville prison and the victim was often left in that position from six to twelve hours. Poor fellows! I have seen flies go in and out of their mouths at will and they could not help themselves. Nearly all who were punished that way had done but a trivial offense, which they were driven to through desperation. There were not many such heartless beings in there. We did not regard them as Union soldiers. They belonged to the very worst element of our large cities, who enlisted as substitutes for thousands of dollars and they had no more consideration for our flag than a Rebel.

I must relate a little incident here to illustrate what our boys would resort to for something to eat. About once a week Capt. Worz would ride through the prison on his grey horse, reins in one hand, cocked revolver in the other and with a continuous string of oaths command us to get out of his way. This particular time he had a fat little dog with him. It was following and had not gone far before it was killed, meat hid away and hide, etc., buried. He did not miss the dog and probably did not know that it had followed him inside. If he had been aware of the disposition of that dog it would have been very expensive for us, for it would have been an excuse to inflict punishment on all by cutting off the rations for two or three days, and probably a demand made for the guilty. Two or three days later, others were attracted by a peculiar odor, which led to the spot where the hide was buried. It was dug up and not wasted. Another time when he was riding through, a poor comrade whose limbs were useless from the effects of scurvy, was directly in his way but was rolling over to escape when his horse struck him with his hoof. I was so near when this happened that I am certain it was Worz's deliberate intention to ride over him, for he urged his horse forward when he saw the poor fellow trying to escape. He writhed in his agony, and casting a scornful look at Worz, muttered something in an undertone. "Vot you say?" demanded Worz. He replied, "I said if I was on an equal footing with you, you would not ride over me". With a tremendous oath Worz bent over and shot the poor fellow through his head. Worz made a complete circuit of the prison with blood hounds every morning to find out whether any had escaped during the night. Once in awhile, some poor comrade who had become completely discouraged and lost all hope of getting out alive, would walk over the dead line on purpose to be shot and end his misery. He did not have to wait to be accommodated, for the guards were always anxious for a furlough of thirty days to visit their folks. There was no shelter inside except some old black tents that were once white, owned by infantry men, which would answer to keep off the sun but not much rain. One lone tree was there, near the southeast corner. It was a pine about 200 feet high, with a few boughs on the very top which afforded us no shade.

During the latter part of February, the Rebs, realizing that the war



was fast drawing to a close and believing that the prisons would soon be inspected by Federal officials, began to prepare for as good a showing as possible. They handed in a lot of poles and commenced at division No. 1, Erected sheds as fast as possible, similar to northern farmers' hay sheds. A long roof supported about fifteen feet in the air on poles. They were not much good for shelters for the roofs were too high and not boarded upon the sides or ends. They continued to put those up when the last of the prisoners were moving out. A cowardly piece of deception that I trust did not deceive our officials.

There were many dying each day but the death rate was less in proportion to our number during the winter months than in hot weather, although our suffering was much more intense. It was considered that cold weather had a tendency to check the scurvy. We thought, considering the way we were clad, that before it was over it would have a very strong tendency to check our breathing.

In January and February, 1835, there were a number of regiments recruited for 90 days, most of whom were clerks and business men who knew the war was nearly over and considered it an opportune time to gain the honor of being a part of Uncle Sam's defenders by simply having a pleasure trip south at the government's expense. They did not care so much for the pay as they did for the honor and the pleasure trip. But alas! In war, safety is not always assured, although in camp far from the field of action. It was not uncommon for raiding parties on either side to penetrate deep into the enemy's country for plunder and destruction. Rebel Generals Forrest and Morgan frequently did this. One of them at this particular time raided so far north that it took a lot of prisoners from a few of those pleasure-seeking regiments and landed them in Andersonville prison. How clean and nice they looked with their new clothes, white soft hands and blanched faces! A jump from feather beds into prison! What a bound, no one realized as well as they! From nice clean meals prepared from the best the market afforded, to government hard-tack, fat salt pork, smoked side meat, with scarcely a streak of lean and black coffee made by yourself is a big leap and it takes weeks to become sufficiently accustomed to the change to relish it. From government rations to the repulsive prison food is a much greater leap, but a jump from the first to the latter was terrible. Their faces were so long that their best friends would scarcely have known them. I sympathized with them as did many others, but many looked upon it as a capital joke and laughed at them. They had probably been without food for twenty-four or more hours and would get their first ration the next afternoon, which they could not eat. It was too bad! It was just awful to think that they had to mangle in the filth, become completely covered with lice, eat repulsive food or starve, and get that in very small allowances, but once a day; lie down at night in those clean clothes on that filthy ground and be exposed to all kinds of weather. They were in better shape by far than we, in regard to clothing, flesh and health, but



they were not seasoned by degrees to withstand such trials as we were. Therefore, the prospect was that we would outlive them. Shortly after their arrival, we had a hard, cold, long drawn-out rain that tested their courage, for their clothes were thoroughly soaked and they could find no place but mud on which to rest their weary bones. At last their courage gave way to tears. One young man, strong, robust, about twenty years of age, could not repress his feelings longer and cried aloud. Many of the old prisoners, some sitting in the mud because they could not stand, naught but skin and bones, laughed at them and some cried out, "Give that calf more rope!" It had the effect of checking his loud cry but he continued to sob. There were men in prison from all walks of life. The cream of our country, through ambition and devotion to our flag, led them into the service. We had comrades there who were graduates of Yale, Harvard and other leading institutions of learning. A graduate of one, laid on his back for days in the open air, hair matted with mud and alive with vermin, exposed to the sun and rain alike, gradually sank away and at last was relieved by death. He uttered no complaint, but in the bloom of youth, he wanted to live. He was not permitted to follow the career which his ability so well fitted him for. Many of the older prisoners, we who had been confined for months in our terrible condition, lived on in hopes of finally being released and taken to our homes. As one day succeeded another that time seemed to be far distant. As long as we could keep our feet we struggled on with hope, but when disease and failing strength laid us low, we were impressed with the idea that our government was not doing justice to us, that it had virtually deserted us to our fate. We had withstood the trials and tortures of the damned without one complaint, always looking forward with faith that it would come to our rescue before it was too late. Exchanges would have been frequent, as in the early part of the war, but for the colored soldiers. There was probably 2,000 of those in Andersonville. Also 200 or more Indians from Wisconsin and Michigan regiments. Our government insisted on the exchange of colored troops as well as the whites and Indians. The Rebels claimed the former as their property and would not exchange them. Uncle Sam regarded it as his duty to stand by all alike regardless of color, who enlisted to fight for the preservation of the Union. That made exchanges a thing of the past and our only hope was in the close of the war. The tests were too severe for many. We had nerve in abundance. We had lived on that principally for many months, but there was a limit to the power of endurance. It was not always the strongest that bore it the longest. Often disease intervened which soon racked the strongest constitutions. We had no medical assistance and when disease set in, it was only a question of time. So it was with our scholastic comrade. While he lay helpless on the ground, his mind was actively employed in composing and committing to memory a poem that would express the feeling prevalent at that time. He felt that the time for body and soul to separate was near at hand. He beckoned a few of us to come near him. We knelt around him

and listened to his faint utterances and repeated them to a comrade, who noted them down on the margin of a Macon newspaper, of which occasionally the Rebels furnished us a very few, and then only when filled with very discouraging news for us. This comrade who had the notes was a friend of mine, and when we got to Benton Barracks, St. Louis, we copied them off. The copy I had I retained until about five years ago and somehow it became misplaced and therefore I have to quote from memory. There were four verses but I can remember but three, as follows :

When our country called for men,  
 We came from forge, store and mill,  
 From workshop, farm and factory  
 The broken ranks to fill.  
 We left our quiet, happy homes  
 And all we loved so well,  
 To vanquish all the unknown foe  
 Or fall where others fell.  
 But in prison drear we languish,  
 And it is our constant cry,  
 Oh, ye who yet can save us,  
 Will you leave us here to die?

The voice of slander tells you  
 That our hearts were weak with fear,  
 That all or nearly all  
 Were captured in the rear.  
 The scars upon our bodies  
 From musket ball and shell,  
 The shattered arms and missing legs  
 A truer tale will tell.  
 We have tried to do our duty,  
 In sight of God on high;  
 Oh, ye who yet can save us,  
 Will you leave us here to die?

Just outside our prison gate  
 There's a grave yard near at hand,  
 Where thirteen thousand Union men  
 Lie beneath the Georgia sands.  
 And scores are layed beside them,  
 As day succeeds each day  
 And thus it will be ever,  
 'Till they all shall pass away.  
 And the last can say when dying  
 With upturned and glazing eye,  
 Both love and faith are dead at home,  
 They have left us here to die!

Think of it, dear reader, how many noble sons gave up their lives there that this great and grand republic might live. Think of the many starved and tortured, who died like dogs and who now fill unknown graves, who might have become illustrious, had they been spared. Think of the thousands of noble mothers whose heart-strings were almost severed with grief over their boys, whose patriotism was tested to the utmost limit and

for whom they constantly prayed that they might be spared and lived in hope that at the dawn of peace they would be returned to their embrace.

When the news was heralded all over the north that all the prisoners were being brought into the Union lines to be fed, clothed and as soon as presentable, would be sent to their respective states to be discharged, how hope sprang up in the breasts of those long-suffering mothers that "My boy will be returned to me at last". How eagerly they scanned the papers, every day they watched the front gate, day in and day out, for the boy that never returned. Long after the living had returned to their homes, they still listened for their footsteps and believed they would yet come. It was a thousand times more trying to think of how they died than though they died at home, but still, how little they knew of what they passed through before death claimed them as its own, and it is well they did not.

There are still many little incidents that I might relate but I have lingered long at Andersonville and now must prepare to leave it forever. The day at last came. The Rebs came in and called aloud, "Pack up and go home!" From a thousand voices the answer was returned, "We are already packed!" How ridiculous, to tell us to pack up, when we had not half rags enough to cover our nakedness. One division a day was taken out. When my division was called, we marched up near the depot, crossed the railroad track and slowly passed through a small frame building with front and back door. There was a desk inside and enrolling paper, on which each had to write his name regiment, company and state on the same line and walk out the rear door. It is a fact that on account of being so long without experience in writing and cramped hands through scurvy it was quite difficult for us to enroll ourselves. Rebel officials in the room remarked, how surprising to see so few among so many that were unable to write. Had they thought of the free school system in the north they need not have wondered. That sight alone should have shamed them in their efforts to establish and perpetuate slavery, the very thing that caused a wide chasm between the rich and poor whites, the former educated by family teachers, the latter, a very great majority, raised in total ignorance.

From our position, while waiting for the rest to become enrolled, on a slight raise of ground, we could see the beautiful cemetery that held more than fourteen thousand of our dead. Beautiful, did I say? Yes, no more beautiful spot for a cemetery on earth. A gradual slope to the south, high ground, covered with green grass, (less the parts that had to be disturbed to bury the dead) just nicely shaded with young, natural growth pines, all about the same size, what more beautiful place could be imagined? Our minds were riveted on something that made us sad. We believed we were going to our lines, which meant in the near future a certainty that we would reach those dearest spots on earth and once more complete the family circles, so long and sadly broken. We had our faith strengthened in this belief, for it was the first time in being moved that we were required to enroll ourselves, besides as we came out of the prison gates the Reb's were

erying out, "Who will give one dollar in green-backs for \$100 of Confederate money?" That looked bad for their cause. We should have felt rejoiced, in a sense we did, but the sight of that quiet city of the dead, our dead comrades, some I knew, all had acquaintances there. To think they could never go, never become enrolled again on this earth, the call to pack up and go home was of no significance to them and the realization of the fact that mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers would never see them more, do you wonder that we felt sad and shed a silent tear

## CHAPTER VII.

"PACK UP AND GO HOME"—ADIEU TO ANDERSONVILLE.

It took considerable time for all to register, for some were poor writers and none could write as once they could.

At last we were ready to climb into the cars, there waiting for us. They were not freights but constructed in imitation of passenger coaches. They were provided with windows and just plain board seats, so much better than we had been accustomed to that we highly appreciated them and regarded it as another omen that we were destined for our lines. With comfortable seats, not crowded, windows to look through to view the country through which we passed was not all. They came through the cars and gave each a nice slice of ham and a few hardtack, rations more than twice as large as they ever furnished us before. The ham was raw and we had no chance to cook it, but that was all right. In a few moments it was gone and our appetites were very much appeased. As we sped through the country to the southwest, we passed through many small towns, most of which, at depots, were provided with guards, whose duty was to march the length of the platform and back to guard, as we supposed, Rebel stores inside. Through their peculiar dress we recognized them at once. They were dressed partly in blue and partly in butternut. They were galvanized Yanks! This was the term applied to those who weakened, went out of the prison and swore allegiance to the Confederacy for, as they put it, to save their lives. We remembered their planning that they would be sent to the front and at the first opportunity desert into our lines. But as those who did not and would not render aid to the Confederate cause prophesied, the Rebs would not trust them, sent them to the rear to relieve the faithful and sent those they could trust to the front, and thus indirectly they rendered as much aid to the Confederate cause as though they were in sympathy with it. I do not know what became of them eventually, but suppose their fate was the same as one I knew. He had to sacrifice all the pay that was due him from the government and take his choice of being shot or serving three years more at the frontier guarding forts and fighting Indians and



denied even a furlough to go home and visit his folks. After three years more service he received a dishonorable discharge. It took the combined efforts of himself and friends more than twenty years to remove that stigma and have him enrolled as one of Uncle Sam's honorable defenders. Any one who was a prisoner has more compassion for them than the general public. We were not all constituted alike. None were infallible. They were weak and cultured the belief that that course was the only one open to life and liberty. Although plead with by their comrades, they blindly followed the path that led to dishonor and disgrace which they can never cast off until relieved by death. The guards mentioned noticed our cheerfulness and were touched by the songs we tried to sing—"Home, Sweet Home", and "Homeward Bound". They believed we were going home and they wanted to go too. They slyly tucked their muskets under the platforms and got into the cars with us. How little they knew of the humiliation in store for them.

At last that railroad came to an end at a town on the east bank of the Tombigbee river. As we had to march at least a half mile from the depot to reach the river to board a steamboat waiting for us, the time was sufficient for two sons of the Emerald Isle to display their wit and amuse not only us, but people sitting on the walks in the town. One was a Reb, the other a Yank with us. The Reb walked along side of our Irish Yank and tried to picture the disgrace he had brought on the mother country by fighting for such a cause and while talking continued to shake his fist at him. Our Irishman was fully a match for him in wit and argument. Their scathing abuse and ready wit caused all who heard it to roar with laughter. The Reb followed us even to the boat before he desisted. Our man gave the other many hot shots, one of which contained more truth than poetry, as follows: "Yees was raised in a counthery where all wor nixt to shlaves to auld Angland and have been crying for laberty for hundreds of years, and now yees spalpeen, yees are here fighting to inshlave a race that niver did yees oiny har-rum".

We had been a little over twenty-four hours without food but as we went on the boat each was given two crackers. The shades of night were fast closing around us as the boat pulled from the shore. It was such pleasant riding on the boat that we longed to have it continue with us to the Gulf of Mexico and transfer us to one of Uncle Sam's ships. About midnight, however, they pulled up to a landing on the other side. The night was beautiful. An almost full moon shining on the water gave it the appearance of silver. We could not sleep, the scene was too grand to miss. The placid waters were disturbed only by the paddles of the wheel, except in one instance. Through an accident one of our comrades fell overboard. The boat did not stop, no life line was thrown out, it was only a Yank, as they estimated, and they were too glad to get rid of him. Such was life with us. In one way and another every day we numbered less. When we left the boat we climbed a steep hill to reach the little town on top where there was a

railroad but no train awaiting us. We were turned into a stock yard near the track which was so wet and filthy that we had to stand up all night. About 10 a. m. a freight train pulled in and about 10:30 we were loaded into box cars. I was the second occupant of one of those cars and it was some minutes before any more entered that one. The first was sitting in the front end, I sat down in the other. He stared at me a moment and came to me and said, "Comrade, did you ever trade a pair of blue pants for a pair of butternut?" "Yes sir, I did when in Savannah prison and believe you have them on." He grasped my hand and said, "You did me a great favor then, for if you had not, you know I would have been stripped of all my clothing for you remember I had an entire suit of butternut and you know what the command was. How do you fare?" "Very poorly," said I, "nothing but two crackers in nearly two days." He lead me to his end of the car, opened a sack containing nearly a half bushel of crackers and bade me help myself. I was ashamed to eat as many as my appetite called for and it is probably well for me that I did not. I asked, "how did you make the raise of so many?" "Well, when I was captured, I smuggled through some money and run a small sutler stand. When the first division was called out of Andersonville I had time to dispose of my small stock and bought these crackers of a guard at night, for I was satisfied we would not be furnished enough food on our journey. Help yourself; don't be afraid of them; there's enough to feed us both until we get through to our lines. I want you to stay with me until we get through". I was more than anxious to do so, for it meant more to me than words can express. He was from York state and belonged to the eastern department. Each gave the other his name and address and agreed to correspond when we reached our homes, but we had to trust to memory, for we had nothing to write on or with and we failed to remember. If this should ever fall into his hands I pray that he will write me and we will make amends for thirty-six years of silence. Our train carried us through to either Selma or Montgomery, Alabama, I do not now remember which, although I remember passing through both places. We had to walk through one of them over a mile to reach another railroad. It had happened that Gen. Wilson with a command of cavalry passed through that town about an hour before our arrival. With him was the 5th Iowa cavalry, my own regiment. Oh, how I wish they had remained one hour more. It would have been so nice to have been taken by our own boys and to have met my company and regimental comrades under such circumstances. The sight of us would have spurred them on to fight like demons! The whole company L of my regiment were Irish. Two of that company had lagged back to get a little more extract of corn and were prisoners when we arrived. They were sent with us and were prisoners only a few days. When we alighted from the train, we became so mixed up that I lost sight of my friend with the crackers. He, through his speculation, had fed himself well and was quite strong. I could not keep up with or search for him in such a throng. The next train landed us within a mile of Jackson,

Miss., the capital of that state. The bridge formerly across the river there was destroyed by General Grant when he took that city in 1863. We walked to the river bank, and as there was no other way, we waded across. It was quite wide and so deep I could barely keep my nose above water. In walking through the city, the effects of Grant's work was still visible. The capitol building had a number of holes through it, made by cannon balls, and the dome was completely wrecked. Besides, many other buildings showed the effects of the battle. We were marched almost a round the city to some timber beyond, and as it was nearly dark, we remained there all night. Shortly after, a very heavy thunder storm came up and rain poured down all night. We understood that it was their intention to feed us that night, and some said rations were brought out to us, but if so, but few saw them. It was so dark that one could not see his hand before his face.

At day-break we commenced our last march with the Johnnies. We had been without food for nearly two days. Black river, twelve miles from Vicksburg, was the dividing line. From Jackson to that river was thirty-five miles. A terrible distance for us hungry, emaciated beings. Much too far, I am sorry to say, for many of our party, who stretched every effort to reach the goal that led to freedom, comfort, happiness and home. But the task was too much for them, for hardly an hour passed but one or more had exhausted his strength and fell dead while taking his last step. Some even died within a mile of the river. So near and then to miss the happiness in store for them. We marched as long as we could see and made but ten miles the first day. At day-break the next morning we were on the road again, without food nearly three days. That day was a repetition of the day before. By marching long after dark we were supposed to be twenty miles from Jackson. Again at day-break we were on our journey; almost four days without food. Foot-sore, weary, weak and starving, at almost a snail's pace, we dragged our feet along. Hunger had disappeared. We had got beyond that, still the sight of food would have brought our craving appetites back to us. After being a certain time without food, hunger is displaced with dizziness and a very faint feeling. Hardly a morning, in prison, could we get up directly and stand. We raised to a sitting position and for a time everything seemed to be turning over and over. In time we would become accustomed to that position and rise to our knees. Everything would be in commotion again for a time and we had to brace ourselves with our hands until the spell was again broken, when we would gradually rise to our feet, but too often to fall to the ground. Sometimes it took two or three attempts of this kind before we were successful. We had the same experience each morning of our journey. Very many of us had to be assisted to our feet and held up until we became accustomed to the position and could stand alone. The stronger, those who had not been prisoners long, performed that work. About 3 p. m. we passed by an officers' camp on a grassy knoll to our left. A cut was made along

the foot of it for the roadway. A colored boy who attended the officers' horses was sitting on the bank watching us pass. I leaned against the bank, told him how long I had been without food and kindly requested him to get me an ear of corn. He replied, "I dun-no massy, I'll try but got to be mighty caiful so massa don't see me." In a few minutes he returned, resumed his seat on the bank and rolled an ear of corn down to me. My mess mate had in the meantime got so far ahead that there was no hope of overtaking him until those who were in the lead had gone into camp for the night. I believe he would have divided with me had he got the ear of corn. I wanted him to have half of it, but it was a terrible struggle for me to keep from tasting, for I knew had I done so I could not have stopped until all was gone. I carried that ear about five hours without eating a grain. At last I found him, broke the ear in two, gave him the choice of pieces and very soon thereafter all was devoured but the cob. That was all my partner and I had to eat in more than five days, and we got no more until we reached our lines and crossed over into freedom—about 4 p. m. the next day. We were informed that night that we were within five miles of Black river. The Rebs let us start in the morning at our leisure. My mess mate and I must have started about 3 p. m. It took quite awhile to assist each to his feet by bracing, but eventually we slowly moved on our journey long before daylight. Notwithstanding our early start, it took us until 12 m. to reach the river. The approach to the river was low and flat and covered with timber within two hundred yards of the bank. The other, the Federal side was a very high bluff. The road for two miles back, leading to the river, was straight as an arrow and in a direct line with the flag-staff and the stars and stripes on the bluff beyond. We must have been more than a mile off when our eyes first beheld it. We stopped spell-bound for an instant and burst into tears. Our joy was so great we could not help it. Our flag never looked so beautiful to us before. It was the grandest sight to us we ever saw. One, who had not been in our position, would fail to comprehend its meaning. I had carried the little pan, bought with rations in Millen more than five months before, purchased at almost the price of life's blood and my wooden spoon to a point where I could see liberty staring me in the face. What more use had I for them? None, I thought, and consigned them to the brush by the wayside. When I told my folks at home about this, how foolish, they said, "You should have brought them home for a relic." They were right but at that time, under the circumstances, I placed no value on them. When within fifty yards of the river, the Confederate officers in command halted us and all sat down on the grass to rest. A Federal officer, how nice he looked with his clean blue suit, crossed the pontoon bridge and met the Confederate about half way between us and the bank of the river. After a short consultation the Confederate pulled out the long roll on which we had written our names in the little office at Andersonville and called them off, our officer looking it over at the same time. Each would answer to his name, pass by them to the



bank of the river and sit down. After all on the roll had been called, there were from forty to fifty left. The officer in blue said to the one in gray, "How is it that you have not the names of those?" The other replied "I do not know." One of our number cried out, "They are galvanized Yanks." Then both understood the situation. The Reb asked, "Do you want them?" "No", replied our officer. "Nor do we", said the Reb. "What shall be done with them?" One of our comrades foolishly cried out, "Shoot them!" They had done wrong and it was a monstrous wrong in the eyes of our government, but they had my heartfelt sympathy. They were only boys; very few over age, and not realizing the consequences, had foolishly and blindly followed their own convictions that they were taking the only possible chance of saving their lives. It is evident to my mind that they were still good Union or they would not have deserted their posts with the Rebs, jumped into the cars and came through with us. There they sat motionless with their heads bended low. They were between two fires. A representative of each of the contending forces confronted them. They had sworn allegiance to both and had deserted. The humiliating position in which they were placed might lead to death. It struck my mess mate very forcibly and he burst into tears, and taking my hand, thanked me over and over for preventing him from doing what they did. He realized then for the first time, where he would have been placed. Our officer took charge of us and gently led us over the pontoon bridge. We were so happy that between tears and smiles we tried to kick up our heels for joy, but there was no kick in us. The road leading to the top of the bluff was winding and steep, too steep for us to walk so we got down on our hands and knees and crawled up.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## UNDER THE BANNER OF THE FREE ONCE MORE.

When the top of the bluff was reached, we looked back and saw our disconsolate boys in the same position. What ever became of them I never learned. I glanced up, as did many others, at the stars and stripes waving in the breeze, and realized that once again "We stood beneath the starry banner free!" There were a lot of boys in blue, how nice, clean, healthy and strong they looked, who greeted us as we passed them to enter the cars there awaiting us, not with smiles, but with long-drawn sympathetic faces. They had made many camp-kettles full of coffee for us and how nice was the aroma as we passed it by. When we were comfortably seated, the boys came through the cars and handed us each a tincup. Soon after, by twos they came, carrying camp-kettles on poles about four feet long. At each seat they set the kettle down and filled our cups. Next, they came with hard tack and gave but one to each person. We wondered if Uncle Sam had become as stingy as the Rebs. The coffee was so hot that it took a long time to drink it but they let us take our time. It was very nice, the first we had had in many long months. The allowance of cracker and coffee was just sufficient to whet our appetites. When we had finished, the cups were all picked up for the next lot, probably the next day. The train pulled out for an eight mile run, four miles from Vicksburg, where we went into camp to be fed, clothed and made presentable before going further. There were many prisoners there before us, probably 30,000, who had been brought to that point from many prisons. We were taken to a high knoll, already staked to form another division. It was not yet dark, but we were so fatigued that we forthwith laid down on the grass and slept until morning. The next morning I heard a whistle blow and as soon as I could regain my feet, I went to the depot but a few rods away to see the train pull in. It was loaded with pickled pork for us ex-prisoners. It appeared like hundreds of barrels were unloaded on that very extensive platform. In a few moments a man commenced to pound the heads in with a hatchet. I stood close by watching the operation, with probably a very hungry look. He noticed me and said, "Would you like to have a piece of this salty, rav

pork?" I replied, "Yes, if you please." He looked all around to satisfy himself that no one was watching and cut off a full pound. I ate it as I stood there and asked for another piece. He replied that he would like to favor me but that he was afraid that it would kill me. If I had had the liberty to help myself it certainly would, for I had not the least control of my appetite. About twenty minutes later another train pulled in loaded with bakers bread. I went back to my quarters for fear I might lose my rations. We soon organized into companies and messes and very soon after the rations came. It seemed as though they waited on us first, as we were the latest to arrive and much more in need of immediate attention. My ration consisted of a very small loaf of bread, a thin slice of pickled pork and a small allowance of coffee. That was for a whole day. Our company was supplied with cooking utensils but I could not wait for my turn and therefore ate the bread and pork and later made some coffee, which finished my rations for that day. Each day our rations were increased a trifle, but it was four or five days before I could divide mine and have two meals per day. Later on, I could divide them into three parts.

As there were so many prisoners there and so many coming each day, the officials were sorely pressed to furnish us with clothing, then tents and blankets, within a reasonable time. I think it was over a week before we were supplied with the former. It would not do to furnish us with tents and blankets until we could discard our rags, wash and free ourselves from vermin and don new suits. At last our clothing came. The pants were the smallest round the waist that the government had in stock, still mine were quite loose when buttoned to the suspender buttons. Each company was furnished a large tub, a bountiful supply of soap and a few extra camp-kettles for the occasion. Fires were made on the banks of the creek that ran through our camp, water was heated and then the scrubbing began. The one to be scrubbed would place his new suit about three rods away from the tub and go in the opposite direction beyond the tub about four rods, strip off his rags and then return and step into the tub of warm water. Two, with scrubbing brushes and soap, would give him a terrible rubbing. When finished he would put on his new suit and go to the camp. Each helped to scrub two and then his turn came. The day after, when we were all clean and presentable, the "Christian Commission Women" visited us and supplied us with shears, combs and razors to cut our hair and shave one another. Each company was furnished a complete outfit, to be returned when through with. In all the time we were prisoners and for some time before, our hair had not been cut, nor had we been shaved, for in active service we could not attend to such matters often. Our hair was very long, hung down on our shoulders and was very much matted. Our thin beards were proportionately long. I have often wondered why some enterprising photographer did not come to our camp and take our pictures as we stood before we washed or discarded our rags. He could have made a small fortune. All would have patronized him and his pay would

have been as certain as though he had it in the bank. We could not have paid him then but all would have been so anxious for such pictures that they would have sent the money upon the receipt of their pay from the government. If we had been camped near a northern city it would have been done. We were not barbers, but we cut each others hair and shaved the best we could. The next day we drew tents and blankets. There were stacks of old discarded rags along the ravine as large as small houses and so infested with gray backs that one could almost see the pile breathe. It was remarkable to observe the nerve displayed by dagoes in loading them and carting them away. What will not some people do for the sake of money? We had to search our new clothing for a few days to remove the last vestige of lice, but how happy we were when freed from these torments that had nearly crazed us for months.

The next thing in order was pen, ink and paper to write a line home to cheer the hearts of our parents with the knowledge that we were still alive. The "Christian Commission Women" again visited us and very kindly furnished us each with a half sheet of note paper, envelope, postage stamp and pen and ink to pass around. It must have cost them quite a sum of money to supply so many thousands, for such material was high in price then and stamps were three cents each. We had no money and would not have until discharged and paid off. At first I thought like many others, I would not write, but give my folks a great surprise when I got home, but the change in my condition prompted me to do otherwise. The change from almost nothing to something to eat and entirely different food, caused in my case a very severe attack of dysentery, which was rapidly wearing away what little there was left of me. I was fast becoming so weak that I felt the necessity of having something different from army rations, so wrote my father as follows:

Dear Father: I am at last in God's country again. The change from almost starvation to government rations has given me a terrible dysentery which is weakening me day by day. I answered the sick call this morning and was ordered to the hospital, but I have such a dread of such places that I begged the doctor to give me some medicine and let me go another day. He did so, and I will not report at sick call again if I can help it. Please send me \$25, that I may buy something that may suit my condition. I hope that all at home are well and that I may be with you soon.

Your affectionate son,

WILLIAM H. LIGHTCAP.

Oh, what might have happened had I failed to write? My folks believed me dead and had what they supposed positive proof of it. Shortly after the exchange in the latter part of the summer of 1864, between Sherman and Hood, of 5,000 western men, one who got out with that exchange went to his home in Dubuque Ia., on a furlough of thirty days. He had friends in Benton, Wis., and one day drove there to visit them. He stayed there until nearly sundown. My home was two miles west of Hazel Green, seven miles southwest of Benton and ten miles northeast of Dubuque. He had to go past my home and as night overtook him before he got there, he stopped

with my father all night. My father was every soldier's friend. He asked him many questions and learned that he was one of the recently exchanged. He did not know my father's name and when he asked if he knew a young man in Andersonville prison by my name, he did not hesitate to tell what he believed to be true. "Yes," he said, "I knew him well; he died a few days before I was exchanged". That settled it. I was mourned as dead. My father was a business man and received many letters each day from parties in Chicago, New York, St. Louis and other places who dealt in flour, for he had a mill and shipped in large quantities. When the mail was brought each day, about 4 p. m., he always placed the letters on a shelf above the desk where they remained until he read the news, for those were very exciting times. He took three daily papers, Chicago, Galena and Dubuque. About the time he had seated himself to read, my uncle, Joshua Atwood, came in. His mail was brought from town with my father's. He took down the letters to see if any of them were for him. He saw my letter stamped at Vicksburg and knew there were thousands of prisoners brought to that place. He was anxious to see it opened for he believed it was from me. He called my father's attention to it and asked him to open it. Father replied, "Don't talk that way; William is dead". My uncle would not be satisfied until that letter was opened and said, "Please do me the favor of opening this letter; it will only take you a moment". He did so and the first words he saw were "Dear Father". He quickly glanced at the bottom to see the signature, sprang out of his seat and ran all the way to the house like a boy, without reading another word until he got there. Oh, what joy was in that household! The dead was alive! He could not think of sending me money. I might not get it. He must go after me at once. He ordered the horses hitched to the buggy and by that time he was ready and drove to Galena, Ill., to catch the night train for St. Louis, Mo. He arrived there just in time the next day to see a steamboat pull out for down the river. He forthwith boarded a train for Cairo, Ill., and arrived there a little ahead of the boat and went down the river to Vicksburg. The joy in my home was only an example of the rejoicing in thousands of homes all over the country.

Those who reached our camp first were fed up and strengthened sufficiently to be transported to Benton Barracks, St. Louis, where all were destined to become enrolled and sent to their respective states to be discharged. A few boat loads had been sent up the river and finally it came our turn. The boat I was on was making the half-circle from Vicksburg through the bay to the channel of the Mississippi river, when we met a boat coming in. I remembered the name of that boat and when we finally met it proved to be the one my father was on. On our boat there was about thirteen hundred. The boat that preceded ours had over seventeen hundred. Through some cause, I do not now remember what, it blew up and nearly all that large number of poor boys, who had braved the trials of worse than death a hundred times, with joy depicted on their brows through the



thought of home so near, were sent to a watery grave. The next day, when the news of that terrible disaster was sent with lightning rapidity all over our broad country, the consternation was great in my home town, for the people figured that my father had had about time to reach Vicksburg, get me and start up the river, and they concluded that we were both lost. Probably the greater portion had written home that they were alive and homeward bound, but those anxious mothers' hopes were blasted forever! Those who wished to give their folks a great surprise and therefore did not write, were probably supposed to have perished in one of the southern prison-pens. The Mississippi was very high at that time and its banks overflowed for miles. Our first night out from Vicksburg was very dark and foggy and it was not possible to keep in the channel or determine our course. The first we knew we were out in the country in the midst of heavy timber and the large water-wheel came in contact with the root of a tree, broke some of the fans and laid us up until daylight, when the boat backed to the river and in its crippled condition, slowly made the trip to the first town, where it laid up nearly all day having the damage repaired. We continued on to St. Louis and thence to Benton Barracks without anything more worthy of note. It was three days before my father could get a return boat from Vicksburg.

The officers at the Barracks were very anxious to enroll the boys with all possible haste and send them to their respective states to be discharged. They therefore called on many who could write a legible hand to assist. I was engaged at that when father returned. It was easy work or I could not have done it. I simply went into one of the barracks, sat down, called all the occupants up one at a time, asked him what state he as from, turned to that page headed by the state, wrote down his name company, regiment, etc., and so continued. When coming out of one to go to the next, I met my father face to face. He was looking in every direction and at every one he met, thinking he would recognize me at sight. I said, "Father!" and offered him my hand. He took it but said, "I think you are mistaken; what is your name?" I told him. "The name is all right but there's no resemblance to my son". I could say no more. I beckoned him to follow me. I led the way to an office in one of the barracks. We sat down on a lounge. The tears ran down my cheeks like rain. I was completely choked. I could not utter a word. The long time since I had heard from home caused me to fear that one or more might have died in the meantime. I attempted three or four times to speak but each time the question I attempted to ask choked me. At last, with strenuous effort, I blurted out, "Are—they—all—well—at—home?" He answered that they were and the spell was broken. It was such a relief to me to hear that, that I had no more trouble to talk. He asked where the headquarters were and said that he wanted to see the officer in command of the barracks. We had no more than reached the walk when a comrade as thin and sallow as myself accosted him thus, "How do you do, Mr. Lightcap!" and offered his hand. My father scruti-



nized him closely to see if he could recognize any resemblance to any person he had ever known but could not and asked him his name. He replied, "I am William Pierce, from Hazel Green, Wis." He was a young man from my own town a little older than myself, but we had known each other from boyhood up. Neither of us knew that the other was a prisoner. He was a member of the Tenth Wisconsin Infantry. We were in Andersonville prison together, came from there to Black river together and thence from our camp within four miles of Vicksburg, were in the same division there, came up on the same boat to St. Louis and then to Benton Barracks together and knew not of each others presence. Within a few minutes four or five more came up and recognized father, but to all he put the same question "What is your name?" They were boys from within a radius of ten miles of home and I knew all of them, but did not recognize them until they gave their names. We proceeded to headquarters and I introduced my father to the officer from whom I had received the enrolling papers. He went at the officer forthwith for a furlough for me for thirty days. His business demanded his immediate return and he wanted to take me home with him. The officer replied that he wanted to enroll all first and send them to their states to be discharged and that he could not grant it. As a last resort, when he saw that his pleadings were of no avail, he asked for a pass for me to go down town, which was granted with the understanding that I should be back at 8 a. m. the next day to roll call. We boarded a street car and rode to the hotel where he had registered. Shortly after, supper was ready. There was a bill of fare and there was very little on it that I did not order. I ate so long and so much that my father became alarmed and commanded me to quit. I reluctantly got up and followed him to the office. I was still very hungry but oppressed with the amount I had eaten. He said, "I am ashamed to think I allowed you to eat so much; you must walk with me until bed time or it will kill you." I could not stand it to walk more than a block without a rest, but he kept me going the best I could until 9 p. m., when we returned to the hotel and went to bed. That exercise tired me completely out, but I believe it saved my life. The next morning before we went in to breakfast I promised him I would quit eating when he told me to. We reached the barracks before 8 a. m. and after roll call he was after the officer again for a furlough, but the best he could do was to get my pass extended twenty-four hours. In taking a short walk along the streets that day, he noticed a sign in front of a clothing store and said, "I believe I know that man. He moved here from Galena, Ill., about a year ago. I used to buy all our clothing of him." We stepped inside and there stood the same man. Father told him my condition and he said, "I have the best remedy in the world for that and before supper come back and I will have some here for him". Before supper we called, it was only a few steps from the hotel, he gave me a wine glass full. It was wine and cloves boiled together and then strained. I had to take the same amount before each meal. The next day being Sunday, he invited us to his house to take

dinner. He had prepared a grand dinner, but I had to be cheeked as usual. I had to be at the barracks every morning for roll call, Sunday included. Monday, my father succeeded in getting me a furlough and some time that day we started for Galena, Ill. I weighed while in St. Louis and tipped the scale at 86 lbs. I weighed at Marietta, Ga., just before I started on my last raid and about ten days before I was captured, 165 lbs. I was not reduced by sickness, for I was always ready for much more rations than I got. From actual exposure and lack of food, I was reduced 79 lbs. The clothier had prepared a gallon jug full of the boiled mixture of cloves and wine for us to take with us. I could not lift it. Father, however, got it to the train, and as I had a wine glass the clothier gave me, I took my doses at regular intervals. We arrived at Galena about 10 p. m., got a livery outfit and driver and reached home some time after midnight. The roads were very bad and we had to drive in a walk the whole distance.

I worked in my father's mill before I enlisted and being very fond of pets, had a cat in the mill which I had raised from a kitten; when I left home it was about one year old. I had trained it to sit up like a dog, walk on its hind feet, jump through my arms as high as I could hold them and at each meal it would follow me to the house and after finishing my meal I always gave it milk or a little meat. On the way back to the mill it would actually enjoy playing leap-frog. When I stopped and leaned forward it knew what it meant. It would jump on my back and over me and run a few steps and stop until I had jumped over it and run a few steps and stopped, and so we continued until we had reached the mill. I also had a dog which was very fond of me, which I had trained and petted also. The next morning I walked to the barn to see some of the men who were working for my father and doing the chores. In a few moments the cat spied me, it jumped onto my shoulder, mewed and purred constantly, rubbed itself against my face and I could not get rid of it. I walked to the house with it and as soon as the dog spied me it was as crazy as the cat. It continually jumped up and tried to kiss my face, whining all the time and so annoyed me in my weak condition that I was compelled to go into the house. My folks told me that when I left home, the dog howled by night for a long time and searched for me by day. The cat mewed and searched the mill over and over for me for a few days and then went to the barn and stayed there all the time I was gone and no inducement offered could induce it to return to the mill where it was so much needed to keep out the rats and mice. From that day the cat went back to the mill and stayed there. My reason for relating the above concerning the cat and dog is to show how astonishing it was that they should both recognize me in my changed condition, instantly, when my father did not. I continued to improve slowly, that is, the wine and cloves very gradually checked my disease. I gained in flesh but not in strength. All was done for me that was possible. I hung in the balance for a long time. After I had entirely recovered, I was told by friends that no one thought I would recover.

The next morning, it was noised around that we were home and an old lady, Mrs. Pierce, walked from Hazel Green to our place, a distance of two miles to ask if we knew or had seen anything of her son William. When informed that we had seen him in Benton Barracks, St. Louis, and that he would be home in a few days, she wrung her hands and with tears of joy running down her cheeks she said, "Oh, my dear boy; I knew he would come! I knew he would come back to me!" After she had sufficiently rested, father had one of the men take her home in a buggy. No one knows what our dear mothers suffered! My sisters told me that my mother often got up from the table without eating a bite, sobbing and exclaiming, "I can not eat when I know my boy is starving!" There is nothing so profound as a mother's love.

Time passed and my furlough of thirty days was nearing its end. It was not like one on a furlough to report again for active duty at its close. Even though my folks knew I would be gone for a short time only, they disliked to see me leave, for they were alarmed at my condition. Although they did not say so in my presence, I could read their thoughts from their sympathetic looks, by glancing quickly at them when they least expected it. I returned to St. Louis and then to Benton Barracks, but found them almost deserted. I got transportation to Clinton, Ia., for myself and about ten others and government rations sufficient for the trip, delivered on the boat. We started up the river without delay. As soldiers, we were deck passengers and slept where we could find a place to lie down. One of our number, just before he was taken prisoner, was shot between the second and third fingers of his right hand. Those fingers were terribly shattered and he was in the hospital two weeks at Andersonville before they received any attention. Then they were amputated while they were festering and sore as a boil. The surgeon then grasped his two remaining fingers, bent them back and with a sharp tool, as quick as a flash drew it across the palm of his hand and cut the cords of those two sound fingers, exclaiming, "Damn you, you will never fire another gun!" I believe it was true, for those two remaining fingers were as stiff as pokers and there was the scar across the palm of his hand as proof of it. He had, on the left lapel of his blouse, a Lincoln badge. While asleep at night it was replaced by a badge of Jeff Davis. He did not know it until the next morning when one of us discovered it. It could not have been done by any other than one of the deck hands. He was a large framed man but thin in flesh, but his rage seemed to give him the nerve and strength of a lion. He walked into the midst of the big brawny deck hands, took the Davis badge and stamped it into the floor, and dared any one of them to acknowledge that he took off the Lincoln badge and put that on him. Not one of the cowards opened his mouth. It was surprising how meekly they took his abuse. After being home nearly thirty days, government rations were not as palatable as I had known them to be. The other boys had not been home and therefore could relish them. I sat on some sacks on deck near the kitchen, where I watched the gentle ripples of the water

and noted the changes in the landscape as we moved slowly up the stream. I could also see the cook's movements through a large open window. The meal he was preparing for the cabin passengers made me long for something better than government rations. He noticed me and probably read my thoughts. In a few moments he said to me, "Will you shell a pan of peas for me?" I replied that I would. He brought out a large pan full and another pan to throw the pods in. It took me some time to shell all, but I felt that I would be rewarded, although he had made no promises. When shelled, he simply thanked me. When the cabin passengers of the boat were called to dinner and the officers of the boat were seated in the cabin, he brought me a large platter covered with oval dishes, containing some of each article of food furnished above. Steamboat meals are always of the best and that was no exception to the rule. The cook called on me for little odd jobs a few times after, but did not forget to give me regular meals as long as I was on the boat, and just the same as was served in the cabin.

We remained in Clinton a week before the government paymaster showed up, then we got our discharges and pay, June 5th, 1865. I received much more money than I expected. In addition to our regular monthly pay, we were allowed twenty-five cents per day for each day we were prisoners and did not draw rations from the government. That is what is called commutation money. So we got something for starving. Uncle Sam was a good, conscientious paymaster.

I went home and gradually gained in flesh until I reached 165 lbs., but my flesh was dark and flabby. I had no muscle or strength for months more, or very little more than I had when I came home on furlough. When I had been home six months I tried to shoulder a sack of bran, forty lbs. in weight, and could not do so. At that time my brother, eleven years old, wanted to scuffle with me, but I could do nothing with him.

It was advertised in the Dubuque, Iowa, papers that on Aug. 12, the Fifth Iowa Cavalry, my regiment, would be at Clinton to be discharged. It was my last opportunity to see all again that were still alive, so I got on a boat at Dubuque and went down there and met them that day in camp back of the town. The reception they gave me after so long an absence, repaid me many times over for the outlay of the trip. They would have me stay in camp with them, so for the last time, I lived on government rations and camped in a tent with them until they were discharged. We were there three or four days before that occurred, then, like the gypsies after the moonstone, they departed in every direction of the compass, never to all meet again.

THE END.









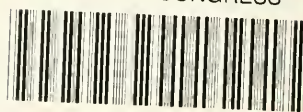








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